



National Disability Award winner
Australian Human Rights Commission winner

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Surf Coast Shire Ordinary Council Meeting

Tuesday, 25 June 2024 at 6pm

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CR PATTISON: Good evening and welcome to our June Council meeting. I'm Mayor Liz Pattison and it's a pleasure to welcome members of the community joining us tonight.

This meeting is also being live streamed, so a big welcome to those tuning in online, and of course welcome to my fellow Councillors here tonight and to Councillor Wellington and to Councillor Schonfelder, who are joining us online. Live captioning will accompany the live stream of this meeting. We hope that this assists those who have hearing difficulties.

I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered on Wadawurrung country and I pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging. The First People have nurtured and protected these lands and waterways for thousands of generations and I am so grateful for the opportunity to live and work in such a beautiful part of the world. We also wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which each person is attending and acknowledge First Nations people who are viewing this meeting.

As always, we have had some really great events taking place over the past month, including the Indigenous Surfing Titles, which took place in late May at Bells Beach/Djarrak. Competitors were treated to sunshine and fantastic waves, with the event providing a vibrant mix of competition and cultural celebration showcasing the top Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from across Australia. One of the event highlights was Landon Smales, from Noosa Heads, making history by dropping two perfect 10 rides on his way to claiming victory in both the men's longboard and junior boys divisions.

Last weekend the Sound Doctor event took place in Anglesea. Audiences were mesmerised by the incredible vocals and accompanying dance moves of artist Marlon Williams. With both nights totally sold out, with long waitlists of hopeful fans, those lucky enough to be in the Anglesea Memorial Hall felt very grateful to be up close to such a talented artist.

And now to our agenda for tonight. So let's get on with it. Thank you. The process, for those that haven't been to a Council meeting - Council meetings operate according to our adopted Governance Rules, which include the following procedures. During the meeting the mover of a motion or an amendment may speak for a maximum of 5 minutes to open the debate and then a further 2 minutes to make a closing statement. Any other Councillors, including the seconder, may speak to a motion for no more than 3 minutes.

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I ask the members of the gallery to avoid using mobile phones during the meeting as this can be distracting for Councillors as well as other members of the gallery. I also note that any unauthorised recording of the meeting is prohibited under our Governance Rules. However, you can access a copy of the official recording on our website after the meeting. So it's there and available, so no need to film it yourself.

Our Pledge - I'd now like to recite the Pledge as a sign of our commitment. As Councillors, we carry out our responsibilities with diligence and integrity and make fair decisions of lasting value for the wellbeing of our community and environment.

Now, we don't have any apologies for tonight's meeting that I'm aware of, no, so we'll move on to confirmation of our minutes. Can I please have a mover and a seconder to confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held on Tuesday, 28 May and the Special Council Meeting for Hearing of Submissions held on 4 June. Can I have a mover? Thank you, Councillor Allen, and seconded by Councillor Hodge. All those in favour. And opposed? And abstaining?

CR BARKER: Just because you've linked them together.

CR PATTISON: Okay, sure, so that motion is passed. Do we have any leave of absence requests? No.

Now, declarations of conflicts of interest. If a Councillor or an officer has conflict of interest, they must declare it now and do so again just before the item is discussed. The Councillor and/or the officer will be asked to leave the chambers while that's being discussed. Are there any declarations of conflicts of interest in relation to tonight's agenda? No.

And we have no submissions for tonight's meeting. That moves us on to public question time. So the next item on the agenda is Public Question Time. Members of the public who wish to ask a question to Council are able to submit their written questions in accordance with Council's Governance Rules, and we have six community members submitting questions and we've got a total of 12 to go through.

So with our question time tonight, our CEO is going to give an opening statement just to give some context around the Haven Torquay residence,

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which we've got a number of questions and I can see people here in our gallery that have questions to ask, so I'll pass over to our CEO.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thank you, Mayor Pattison. So as the Mayor mentioned, we've got a range of questions tonight about the integrated social housing project at Silvereye Street in Torquay called Haven Torquay. Whilst we will be providing individual responses to each of your questions tonight, I thought it would be helpful if I provide some context first to help people's understanding of the project.

Haven Torquay is not a Council project and Council does not have a role in approving the scope or location of the development. Haven Torquay is being delivered by Mind Australia, which is a not-for-profit organisation that supports people experiencing mental health and wellbeing concerns. The residence will provide people who have significant mental illness with long-term social housing and 24-hour, seven day a week support from qualified staff living onsite.

This project is designated Community Care Accommodation, which means a planning permit is not required subject to the development meeting certain conditions as set out in the Victorian Planning Provisions. When a project is exempt from the planning process, Council does not have a role in assessing the suitability of the site. Nor do we make recommendations on other sites.

Council is, however, aware of the high community interest in the project and have emphasised to Mind Australia and to Homes Victoria, who funded the project, the importance of providing information to the community. We are strongly encouraging their representatives to engage closely with interested residents. We understand that Mind Australia contacted local residents in late 2023 introducing themselves and have provided a fact sheet on the project. We also understand they've liaised with adjoining residents recently to provide more information.

For some questions tonight, Council is not the right organisation to provide the answer and we understand that Mind Australia is committed to responding to questions they receive. In doing so, they've advised that they consider the privacy and rights of residents who might live there in the future when providing their responses.

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Hopefully this is helpful for people in understanding the context for the project, including the planning process that applies, and now we're really happy to address each of the questions individually.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Ms Seymour. So we'll now - I'll now call out the different public questions and get those that are here to come up and sit at the chair and read out your question and then we can respond to you. So Adam Reardon, are you here? Thanks, Adam.

ADAM REARDON: I'll just be reading it off my phone.

CR PATTISON: Yes, sure.

ADAM REARDON: Firstly, thank you, everyone, for taking the time to listen to me this evening. I really appreciate it.

CR PATTISON: Can I just check, does that microphone - maybe bring it a little bit closer because people online won't be able to hear you otherwise.

ADAM REARDON: Oh, how is that?

CR PATTISON: No, I don't think that one is working. Sorry, we just want to make sure that those online can also hear your question.

OFFICER: Can we just test that? Can we hear that one?

CR PATTISON: It's not really very - you might need to get him to use that one because it doesn't seem to be picking up properly. Sorry, Adam. We'll get the microphone sorted, first cab off the rank.

OFFICER: There you go.

ADAM REARDON: Thank you. How is that?

CR PATTISON: That's much better, thank you.

ADAM REARDON: Perfect. I'll launch straight into it then, but thank you for taking the time.

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I suppose the context of these questions comes from my perspective. I'm one of the adjacent neighbours to this facility on the length of the boundary along Silvereve Street.

So my first one: could Council, and specifically Mayor Liz Pattison, disclose the length, type and level of their relationship with Gil Callister, current CEO of Mind Australia? Members of the community have received separate correspondence from both the CEO and the Mayor that has identical wording in regards to the Haven facility attempting to be built at 26 Silvereve Street, Torquay. In light of these correspondence, can Council honestly say they have been impartial in listening/assessing the concerns of the community when clearly there has been collaboration by at least one Councillor and a CEO who is motivated by business gain in ensuring this facility goes ahead?

CR PATTISON: Thanks for your question, Adam, and I think it's important to understand with important - and projects like this that we don't have a role in we liaise with Mind Australia, Haven Homes to understand what they're proposing and they provide us with fact sheets and information because it's not our project. So when I've responded to community members, I've used information that's provided to me in that fact sheet and therefore the content that I've sent out has obviously been reflected also in content that the CEO from Mind Australia has sent out. But just to put it simply, I have no relationship with the CEO of Mind Australia and there's no vested interest, just as simple as that.

ADAM REARDON: Can I speak to that then?

CR PATTISON: That's not normally the process.

ADAM REARDON: Okay, no problem, okay. So just my second question then?

CR PATTISON: Yeah, great, thanks.

ADAM REARDON: Okay. The proposed build has six rooms planned on the western boundary, so the boundary next to our house, each with a separate private balcony/space attached to each room. The location of the boundaries of these rooms results in only a 1.8 metre separation from our children's bedroom window. Mind Australia have informed us that their tenancy agreement allows their residents to smoke in their rooms and on these private balconies. With the fact that this is a staffed operating facility, why has this development been allowed to build without regard for our health and safety as

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neighbours' exposure to secondhand smoke? Considering the fact that there is such a high prevalence for smoking in the community of those suffering from severe long-term mental ill health, we believe that we are overly exposed to a risk of secondhand smoke due to the approval of the design as it stands. Would Council advocate for the continued health of their community members in their own homes to have the design of the facility changed to meet public health standards?

CR PATTISON: Thanks for your question, Adam, and I can understand the concern you have around the secondhand smoke and the like. Because this relates more to the planning-type operational aspects, our CEO will respond to this question.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks, Adam. Thanks for your question. So our understanding is that the setback for the proposed building is 3 metres from the boundary and that's the advice that has been provided to us by Mind Australia. That 3 metre setback is compliant with building envelopes on the title and Haven Torquay meets all the building standards and planning requirements, including those relating to building height and proximity to property boundaries, which gives us no capacity to challenge that.

I guess it's not - we can't predict whether or not any of the residents who have rooms along that boundary will be smokers, but it's not something that's prohibited in terms of domestic settings. If there's an issue, if you've got concerns with residents who are smoking, it's a situation a bit like noisy neighbours or others and we'd encourage you to speak to Haven Homes and Mind Australia about that and we would hope that they would, you know, take those considerations seriously as part of their work in supporting their residents.

ADAM REARDON: Sorry, Robyn, but can I just share with you the design? So while, yes, the main facility has its setback to 3 metres, this room right here has its private open space balcony intruding into that 3 metre space. It finishes within 2 feet of our boundary fence, which is then only 1.2 metres away from our children's bedroom window. So yes, while the structure itself, the main body of the structure, is 3 metres off the boundary, there is elements that the resident is entitled to smoke in attached to their room protruding off that 3 metre setback as a private space for them to use. So I think there might have been a misinterpretation in your planning department.

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MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Okay, that's really helpful feedback. Our building team can have a look at that to make sure that the plans are compliant and meet the requirements around the setback. So I really appreciate the feedback and ensuring that - because we're very keen to make sure that the building requirements are met.

ADAM REARDON: Okay. Thank you very much for taking the time to listen to me.

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Adam.

ADAM REARDON: Appreciate it.

CR PATTISON: Thanks for coming in. We'll now move on to our next question. That's from Dallas Fett. Dallas, would you like to come up and read your question?

DALLAS FETT: Thanks for having me. I guess I speak on behalf of probably not just myself and everyone in Silvereye Street, but the 200 families that have joined the Facebook group site that we started when we first heard about this and I guess the other sort of 900 signatories that came on to this petition as well that I'm sure some of you are fully aware of.

Now, I could go on about this establishment and everything that I've done to try to get it to be relocated, but yet I've found that no one in the Labor Government is willing to talk to myself or any other resident for that matter. The Council has been responsive and I guess I assumed that to a point you would be somewhat advocates for us to speak with people like the Labor Government to help us get some sort of communication from them.

So I guess, in summary, I'm sure you've already read my question, I don't need to read it out, but it's about relocating it to somewhere more feasible for them, for the residents and for all the families that have kids there. I honestly can't understand its location. To me, it is just ignorant, negligible, whatever word you want to find for it. I just find it absolutely absurd.

Now, I'm not against mental health. I want them to have as much possible support as they possibly can. What I don't want to happen is for a child to be impacted by one of them and my kids go to that school and I live in that street. They go across to the basketball court whenever they want and there's

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kids playing there all the time. There's just more of a reason for something to go wrong.

So I was wondering from the Council if they had a chance to talk to the Haven group about some form of relocation. There is land.

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Dallas. We'll respond to your question. And just so you understand, our officers and myself as Mayor, we do speak to our counterparts in state and federal politics and we have discussed Haven Homes and we do talk and so officers and Councillors are engaged on the matter.

DALLAS FETT: Yes.

CR PATTISON: So I just wanted to let you know it's not that we are turning a blind eye and not engaged on it. It's something that we liaise with. Obviously, there's a lot of concern in the community. The specifics of your question once again is more of a planning type matter, so our CEO will respond directly to your question.

DALLAS FETT: Yes.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: I support what the Mayor has said. We've spoken to a whole range of State Government stakeholders and Federal Government around this development.

DALLAS FETT: Yes.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: But in relation to your specific question about the relocation, again, we don't play a role in where these homes are placed and what sites are more suitable because it sits outside the Planning Scheme, so it isn't actually a decision that we have any input into at all because under the Planning Scheme the Community Care Accommodation can be developed on residential land without approval or involvement from us.

DALLAS FETT: Yes. I've heard it a thousand times. But that wasn't the question. It was more so, you know, the Council being advocates for us to talk with those groups to find a better location because that is not a good location. It doesn't matter who you speak to, even people that support mental health sit there and say that's just silly.

CR PATTISON: Did you want to read your second question, Dallas?

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DALLAS FETT: I'd love to, yes, and this was probably my most concerning one out of them all and I'm not going to read it word for word, I'm just going to throw it out there to you guys. If something does happen, we all know that there are no ambulances, there are no manned police stations here on a 24-hour. What happens when something does go wrong?

Now, I know you can sit there and say that they've got this exemplary record of being superb, but yet we've seen no statistics or no information. No one from the Haven Group has been willing to contact anyone apart from the two people that live next door to them. So I don't understand how we can sit there and believe anything they have to say when they can't even reach out to us and talk to us about everything that we're worried about. It just shows clear disregard for the community whatsoever.

So I know - I'm not getting angry at you guys, I'm getting angry at the situation and the fact that they've done nothing, nothing, and it just proves that they're just hiding something or they're worried about something. I don't know what it is. But if they just came out and spoke to us about it as a group, maybe these issues wouldn't be here.

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Dallas. I'll pass that one to our CEO around the specifics that you've put in to your --

DALLAS FETT: Yes, thank you.

CR PATTISON: -- question just around the emergency services and those sorts of things.

DALLAS FETT: Yes, absolutely.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Getting back to your point, Dallas, again, we have spoken and raised that with Mind Australia and Haven as well about the importance of working with community. That isn't something that we haven't been active in talking to them about that on all of our community's behalf. So we have advocated for that. And I guess part of the examples around how we've tried to share information that's provided is the example that Adam was concerned about around potentially us being too closely associated with them, which is not the case. It's about the advocacy that we're doing around encouraging Mind Australia and Haven to work with all of you and bring that forward.

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But in relation to your specific question in relation to us doing a risk assessment, we haven't done that and the advice that we've been provided from Haven is that, which I can see you smiling, so you've again probably heard this before - is that in terms of their experience with their other homes, there hasn't been a high frequency of callouts for ambulances or emergency services at those other facilities.

DALLAS FETT: Yes.

CR PATTISON: Thanks for coming --

DALLAS FETT: No problem.

CR PATTISON: -- to the Council meeting and asking your question. We appreciate you taking the time.

CR ALLEN: Mayor, Councillor Wellington has got her hand raised.

CR PATTISON: I know, but this is a public question time, so we're hearing from the public. Thank you.

Our next question is from Ben Everett. Ben, did you - are you here and would you like to read your question? No? I'll read out Ben's question. So Ben is from Torquay and it's once again around Haven Silvereye Street risk assessment. "What risk/impact assessment has been performed for safe pathways for kids, traffic increases when parents no longer feel safe letting their kids walk, et cetera? Please share these assessments with the community." So once again, I'll pass this to our CEO to respond to.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So thanks, Ben, for your question. All the existing streets have standard footpaths constructed as part of the development with standard crossing points and intersections. A wombat crossing has been installed on Legacy Drive close to Silvereye Street. A future path is to be designed and constructed on the open space area to the south of the school.

CR PATTISON: And Ben's second question: "Was a risk/impact assessment done on the negative impacts to residents? Where is that assessment? How will this be a good place for the residents who will call Haven Torquay home?"

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MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So again, this isn't a question that we can answer, other than to say it's our understanding that the project will provide accommodation to meet the needs of local community members. We're mindful of the rights of the future residents to have a home with the support they need to lead independent and fulfilling lives.

CR PATTISON: So thank you, Ben, for your question. Our next question is from Naomi Stewart. Are you here, Naomi?

NAOMI STEWART: Yes.

CR PATTISON: Thank you.

NAOMI STEWART: Thank you for your time. My first question is: when Council officers assessed the onsite parking for this proposed 12-unit mental health facility at 26 Silvereye Street, Torquay, there are comments that - comments at least carpark 3 needs to have sufficient space to be able to turn around so as to exit the carpark in a forward motion. How does Council propose to make sure that this complies?

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Naomi, for your question and it's more of a planning matter, so our CEO will respond.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks, Naomi. We did request some additional information from Mind Australia and they've come back with information that shows that the vehicle turning movements can be achieved for that car parking space so that the car can exit in a forward-facing motion.

CR PATTISON: And would you like to read your second question, Naomi?

NAOMI STEWART: Yes, it will be interesting to see. The second one: as this proposed 12-unit mental health facility at 26 Silvereye Street, Torquay is directly opposite the rear of Torquay Coast Primary School, the children should have the right to feel safe when entering, during and exiting the school grounds. What does Council propose to do to ensure that they are kept safe?

CR PATTISON: I'll pass that one to our CEO.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So in terms of the researched evidence on this topic around the safety of these homes, we know that the evidence says that people living with mental illness who are receiving effective treatment are no more

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violent or dangerous than the rest of the population. Crimes against children that are perpetrated by strangers are obviously incredibly shocking and naturally attract media headlines, but statistically, thankfully, are very rare, and I know that doesn't provide you with a level of comfort, but given what we know about people who are being supported and receiving treatment and again that there is no greater risk than anyone else living in our community.

In addition to that, the Discrimination Act of 1992 makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person with a disability in moving freely around the community accessing public places and renting or buying a home and that research and evidence comes from information from the Better Health Channel and the Australian Human Rights Commission. Thank you for your questions.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Naomi.

NAOMI STEWART: Can I just add, have any of your Councillors or anybody here physically been and witnessed firsthand for themselves at 3pm on a weekday at the rear of the school to see the chaos of people coming and going? Has anybody ever been there physically and seen it because you put this - it's bad enough as it is without putting this overdevelopment there as well.

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Naomi. I can see the concern in it and I appreciate you raising it. Thank you. Our next question is from Ian Stewart. Ian, would you like to come up?

IAN STEWART: Thank you. Good evening, Councillors and officers. My question is: the development proposed at 26 Silvereye Street provides for 12 single-bedroom units plus onsite accommodation for staff. This unit density is higher than any other development located in Torquay that Council has refused applications previously based on housing density. Why did Council not raise concerns about this development density?

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Ian, for your question and as mentioned earlier, Council isn't the responsible authority for the project and the homes do not require a planning permit. So, in short, we just don't have a role in authorising the proposal for this project.

IAN STEWART: I understand you don't have a planning role, but you do have an advocacy role. So why wouldn't you as a Council raise these concerns with the developer and say, "Look, what's being proposed is an overdevelopment

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for the site, can't you actually look at reducing it?", and at least have some comments to the developer to try to get it reduced. It's ridiculous the overdevelopment on that site - 13 units in under 1000 square metres, unbelievable.

CR PATTISON: Did you want to read out your second question?

IAN STEWART: Yes, I can do that, thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, that's great.

IAN STEWART: The second question is: the proposed development at 26 Silvereye Street has been raised with Council in the past. Why does Surf Coast Council and Councillors believe that siting a mental health facility opposite a primary school entrance is a good community outcome? If Council does not believe this is a good community outcome, why has Council not advocated for its relocation?

CR PATTISON: So we haven't taken a position on these homes or their location, other than what we have said earlier. I think it's important to note that the people that live in these homes already live in our community, so I just think that's really important to understand. You know, we're not - you know, Mind Australia wouldn't be shipping a whole lot of people in to live there. These people exist and live in our community and have the right for a place to live. So I just think that that's important context.

IAN STEWART: Nobody denies that.

CR PATTISON: Yes, that's good. Great. Thanks for your question, Ian.

IAN STEWART: Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Our next question is from Mat Hines from Torquay. Mat, did you want to come and read your question?

MAT HINES: Okay. On quite a different matter. So Mat Hines from Surf Coast Energy Group here in Torquay. So thank you for the opportunity to ask these questions and I'll ask them together given their interconnectedness. Is Council aware that under the recent changes to the bus network it just became a lot more difficult for many people in our community to move around without relying on a car? Surf Coast Energy Group welcomes the new direct route to

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Geelong with its evening operating hours. However, this was sold to the community as a rapid service running every 15 minutes. Instead, we have a service that is no longer rapid and will now run every 30 minutes and yet only once an hour in the evening and also in weekend afternoons. The two new routes are also far from adequate, every 60 minutes and no weekend evening service at all. The well-used routes to the Sands have been cut, as has the promised route along Grossmans Road, impacting not only residents but also tourists and workers in these areas.

Perhaps worst off are Jan Juc residents, who have gone from one bus every 40 minutes to one every hour, a 10-minute longer journey, and the need to interchange in Torquay or Marshall, adding a further 10 to 20 minutes to their journey, and the community calls for a direct and frequent bus service to Deakin Waurin Ponds Epworth, a journey which currently takes over an hour by bus, and a local service for Anglesea have gone unanswered.

How does Council plan to make it easier for people to move around without relying on a car when the actions at the state level are making this more difficult? Is it time for Council to play a more active role in planning for and advocating for both the public and active transport needs of our community, our residents, our workers, and our visitors, for those travelling to and from Geelong and to and from Melbourne?

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Mat, for your question and it was great to hear your submission at our recent Budget Hearing of Submissions and I know you're a strong advocate for integrated transport in our region and that's really important.

We're definitely aware of the changes PTV have made to their bus network and we know that PTV, although they did - they ran a lot of community engagement process before finalising these new bus routes and timetables, we have heard from a number of Jan Juc residents around issues with kids getting to school and people getting to work and the like and the impact that this changed timetable has had. So there's definitely a tradeoff between the faster Torquay service and then the outlining Sands and Jan Juc area that's impacted. We have passed those on to PTV and we do encourage yourself, which I'm sure you have, and those that are getting in contact with us with their concerns to raise them directly to PTV because obviously they're the responsible authority in relation to that.

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And in relation to the second - it was all one, but there's kind of two parts to it. We're continuing to work on opportunities to make it easier for people to move around without relying on cars. I know that's been a focus - that was a focus of our Council plan and it's something that we can do more on and we want to do more on and I think you'd be aware of the work that is being done by the Safer Cycling and Road Safety Strategies.

We've had good success in attracting grant funding for implementing cycle safety improvements as well as installing a number of wombat crossing and other measures to improve pedestrian safety and later on in our meeting when we look at our transfer tables, we can see a number of grants that are coming through and the dollars that's being allocated around pedestrian and cycle safety.

Council is also about to commence a piece of work in conjunction with the City of Greater Geelong to look at options for a future cycle link between Armstrong Creek and Torquay, which is something that lots of people welcome that commute into Geelong. Of course we can and need to do more and I take your point about whether the State Government can as well.

When we think about further advocacy and planning, we will try and use existing local government forums, meetings with politicians and our work with G21. More ambitious programs of work need to be balanced with Council's many other competing priorities, unfortunately.

That said, in the new financial year we'll be undertaking an integrated transport planning assessment which will help us get a better handle on our capabilities and what would be required to move further towards best practice. We hope that having this information will help to inform the incoming Council when its looking at making decisions about where to focus its efforts and to get the best advancements in that area. So thanks, Mat, for your question on that.

MAT HINES: Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Mayor Pattison, one of the points that Councillor Barker was keen to make was that one of the things that's really important is that people touch on to the buses because that data really helps inform future

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groups and so that's an important part of the advocacy is ensuring that PTV have visibility around the volumes of people using our bus services.

CR PATTISON: I think that's an important one with kids and I have been drilling it into my kids at home, it's not just a free school bus, you need to tap on, because I think perhaps a lot of the young people or the people going on the school bus into Geelong may not have been always doing that and so the data wasn't supporting the use of that service.

MAT HINES: Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Mat. That's good. I think it's an important point. Thanks, Robyn, and thanks Councillor Barker. That completes the end of our Public Question Time and we have no petitions and we have no Notice of Motions.

CR WELLINGTON: Mayor Pattison, may I just participate just briefly in the Public Question Time just for --

CR PATTISON: It's not standard practice that Councillors participate in Public Question Time, Councillor Wellington.

CR WELLINGTON: So is that a no?

CR PATTISON: I'll just quickly check the Governance Rules. I don't think it's normal that we do that.

CR WELLINGTON: Well, I'm just asking for your discretion. I don't know that there's a need to check the Governance Rules, but I just wanted to make a quick comment actually which I feel is important in the context of some of the questions we've heard. Perhaps if it's not in our Governance Rules, it should be so that Councillors can actually engage with the community during question time.

CR PATTISON: I'm pretty sure that's not the case. Sorry, there's just about 15 or 20 different items on public question time. I'm not that fast at reading it. That's fine, Councillor Wellington, you can ask your question.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. Well, it was - it's really - look, I'm really concerned about those residents from adjacent to the mental health facility and I'm a bit surprised at our response and I just wonder if the CEO could

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think about perhaps an approach that's a bit more facilitatory in terms of trying to get Haven Homes and Mind Australia with the residents in more of a problem solving kind of approach. I think that is our role as a Council. I think these residents also don't at the moment have a local state member who can help them because Mr Cheeseman seems to be missing in action. So I'm just wondering we seem to be sort of --

CR PATTISON: What's your question, Councillor Wellington?

CR WELLINGTON: I've asked my question.

CR PATTISON: Okay, so can we be more collaborative?

CR WELLINGTON: Sorry, did you want me to ask my question?

CR PATTISON: Yes, it would be good to get the question, please.

CR WELLINGTON: Could the CEO consider a more facilitatory approach where we try to get the residents who are concerned about the impact, and I'm concerned having heard about this smoking, I have to say. We operate - we are implementers of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act and the notion of people being on balconies potentially smoking within --

CR PATTISON: Thanks for your question, Councillor Wellington. I'll put that to our CEO.

CR WELLINGTON: If I just finish the question. The question is can the CEO support some sort of facilitation between the residents and Mind Australia and Haven Homes to actually sit down around a table and talk about these concerns and see if there is problem solving that can - I can think of solutions already, I have to be honest.

CR PATTISON: Thanks for that question, Councillor Wellington.

CR WELLINGTON: So can we take our role as an advocate as Council a little bit more actively in this circumstance?

CR PATTISON: Thank you for that and just for clarity, I understand that our officers have been engaging regularly with Mind Australia and Haven Homes around what you're seeking.

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CR WELLINGTON: It's about the residents getting together.

CR PATTISON: Yes, yes, we have been. We have been. Our officers have been, but I'll pass that on to our CEO.

CR WELLINGTON: Can I just clarify, sorry, have the officers facilitated meetings between the residents and Mind --

CR PATTISON: So Councillor Wellington, what I was trying to say was that our officers have worked with Haven Homes and Mind Australia to seek further engagement.

CR WELLINGTON: But not with the residents present. I just want to be clear about what's been happening. My understanding is the residents haven't had opportunities --

CR PATTISON: Councillor Wellington, this is, as we said, a Public Question Time, it's not a Councillor conversation on Public Question Time --

CR WELLINGTON: I understand that --

CR PATTISON: -- so if you'll allow our CEO to respond to the question.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Councillor Wellington, we've had a number of conversations over a reasonable period of time with both Mind Australia and Haven Homes and as part of that, we have been encouraging them to meet with community and provide information to the community. That's been our primary advocacy.

And in relation to elected other - we know that the local member in this region, Richard Riordan, has also been advocating and working with residents in that space, which is, I guess, the local member, as opposed to Darren Cheeseman.

CR WELLINGTON: Sorry, apologies, I got that wrong. I suppose my question --

CR PATTISON: Thanks for your --

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CR WELLINGTON: -- is that given that it's obviously not working - if I can just ask the CEO a question. Given that it's obviously not working, can we take a more active step about trying to get the parties together? These residents are in an impossible situation. They've got no information and no ability to talk to anybody. Surely we can help them.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Wellington. I appreciate your concern for residents and we know we have the residents here who are concerned and our officers are working both with residents and with Mind Australia. So we're finished our Public Question Time.

CR WELLINGTON: Could I just ask the CEO --

CR PATTISON: We're finished our Public Question Time, thank you, Councillor Wellington, and we'll now move on with the meeting. You can have a further conversation with our CEO at a later point.

CR WELLINGTON: Well, I get stonewalled too, Mayor Pattison. I'm stonewalled --

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Wellington. We're now moving on. No, we're moving on with the meeting, thank you.

CR WELLINGTON: Well, we'll take this issue offline.

CR PATTISON: Governance, could you please mute Councillor Wellington so we can continue with the meeting? Thank you.

We're now moving on to our reports, Response to Petition - Duck Shooting in Modewarre. The purpose of this report is to respond to the two petitions titled "Petition of Permanent Closure of Lake Gherang and Lake Modewarre to Duck Shooting" and "Closure of Brown Swamp and Lake Modewarre to All Native Bird Shooting" which were received by Council at its May 2024 meeting. We have a recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion?

CR WELLINGTON: I'll move, Mayor Pattison. I think I'm muted.

CR PATTISON: That's moved by Councillor Schonfelder - you're not muted, Councillor Wellington, you can still speak - seconded by Councillor Wellington, thank you. And Councillor Schonfelder, is that as per the recommendation?

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CR SCHONFELDER: Yes, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would you like to speak to the motion, Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Yes, please. I'd like to thank all the local residents and all the people who have signed the different petitions and have expressed their interest in this matter and that's all I wish to say. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Wellington, would you like to speak to the matter?

CR WELLINGTON: Thanks, Mayor Pattison. As a Councillor, I fiercely stood up for residents and ratepayers' right to peaceful enjoyment of their homes and I've done that for 12 years and I'm not going to change that now. Whether that be about smoking on balconies next to their children's windows or whether it be about children being woken by gunshots at 6am in the morning, the issue is the same and it is the responsibility of this Council to advocate for people in that regard and I find it extraordinary that we would advocate for the rights of the residents impacted by duck shooting, and I support that absolutely, but we won't advocate and try to find a solution for residents who are raising legitimate concerns about the sorts of smoking issues that we just heard.

There's always competing priorities between neighbours and people using public land or people using private land. Duck shooters will argue that their wellbeing is supported by being out in the great outdoors and shooting animals. Neighbours will argue that shotgun blasts at daybreak and dusk over the duck shooting season are unreasonable and potentially creating a dangerous nuisance. Of course the ducks are obviously key stakeholders, but I'm not here for them. To me the competing rights are experiences of duck hunters and residents are what the concern is.

There are other opportunities for duck hunters away from developed areas, but most residents can't move their dream homes. And the argument that they came to a nuisance is fallacious. The absence of signage and hunting for most of the year means that people seeking a quiet rural lifestyle would have no idea of the nuisance and could not have knowingly accepted it.

So for me duck hunters' passion for their past-time can't outweigh the rights of residents to safety and relative peace in their homes. Shooting is a fact of

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rural life. When it happens near me, as it does from time to time, it disturbs my elderly dog. I bring him inside and I put him under my desk to keep him calm and he puts his head on my feet and he trembles and sometimes he howls. There is no doubt that this can be a very disturbing noise for animals. We sit it out together. I've never had children at home when that's happened, but I believe the parents who live near these lakes when they say the experience has been terrifying for their children. And obviously, apart from the experience, the fear that that can create, the dangers of mixing inexperienced people and firearms should be obvious to everybody.

So as proposed in this motion, duck hunters should progress their arguments with the authority responsible for regulating duck hunting. Council's responsibility is to support public health and wellbeing and its response to residents' concerns about hunting in Lake Modewarre and Brown Swamp did that appropriately, in my view. I would like to see Council take a similarly active approach to the residents we have just heard in relation to the residential mental health facility where there are legitimate concerns. We can either wait for something to happen and then intervene or we can be a bit more proactive and try to facilitate solutions in that way. So I'm satisfied with our position on this and I support the recommendation.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion? Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor. My comments are in no way a reflection on the shooters who hold their view - in their view a valid position, but I do want to say over these petitions I was extremely disappointed to read several accounts in the local press from sources that should - no, I'll rephrase that, from sources that do know better. The accounts were misleading and inaccurate on the Council's position and the Council's power in this matter.

I thought that the level of public debate in this country was above trickle-down Trump, but apparently not so, apparently not so. The position - the reflection on Council's position was totally false and I just wanted to point that out. It was very disappointing.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. As we've just heard through Public Question Time, we have compelling reasons for us to advocate to the State Government

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for planning matters that fall outside our Planning Scheme. Yet it appears we are reluctant to do this. The concerns around shooting are related to an activity that has been going on in the area for more than 100 years. If someone moves to a property near an airport, it's incumbent on them to do due diligence, not to ban the airport operating. The same goes for this topic.

Locally, we've had impacts to how the Torquay Airport functions over the last 30-odd years due to people moving into the Sands. Now, is it the right of people moving into the Sands to have a negative impact on the way the Torquay Airport functions or is it a breach of the operators at Torquay Airport to have someone moving in negatively affect their business?

This motion allows us an opportunity to amend a prior decision. Point 2 of the motion is a decision that I think is a waste of Council resources and while the actions from Notice of Motion 157 have been carried out, we do not need to affirm our position on the matter of duck hunting. I can support the other four points of the recommendation and will foreshadow an alternate motion that omits point 2 should this motion fail.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Would any other Councillors wish to speak? Councillor Schonfelder, do you have any closing remarks?

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor, I believe Councillor Wellington has a question that she'd like to ask.

CR PATTISON: Do you have a question, Councillor Wellington, or have you just got that up from earlier?

CR WELLINGTON: That was my aborted and stonewalled previous question, Mayor Stapleton --

CR PATTISON: So I take it that was no question, thanks.

CR WELLINGTON: -- Mayor Pattison.

CR PATTISON: If you could take your hand down, that would be great. Councillor Schonfelder, do you have any closing remarks?

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor, I'd like to just thank the Councillors who have spoken and I agree with Councillor Allen about the sensationalist and the sad

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attitude perhaps of the journalist who wrote about this subject. I thought they could have shown more maturity.

But I'll make one final point. Shooters have actually approached me who live locally and they said to me that they actually don't think there should be duck shooting at the lakes and waterways that have been identified in this manner. Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. And the motion is carried.

CR WELLINGTON: What was the vote, Mayor Pattison, please?

CR PATTISON: The vote was 8-1. We now move on to Adoption of Budget Report 2024-25. The purpose of this report is for Council to adopt the Budget Report 2024-25, declare the rates and charges for the 2024-25 financial year and set the 2024-25 Fees and Charges.

Officers have asked me to note that after this item we will be considering a confidential agenda item relating to the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre. This will have some financial implications, so if Council resolves as recommended with that confidential item, we will then be asked to consider a revised Budget. We do still need to consider the Budget as presented in this agenda item as Council is required to adopt our Budget by 30 June.

We have a recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion? Councillor Allen - is that as per the recommendation.

CR ALLEN: Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And do I have a seconder? Councillor Stapleton. Would you like to speak, Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thank you, Mayor. The purpose of the motion is to adopt the 2024-25 Budget, to declare the rates and charges and to approve the schedule of Council fees and charges for the same period. We also receive the report containing the 26 community submissions and the single submission from the organisation resulting from the period of public exhibition after the Draft Budget was adopted for exhibition at the April Council meeting.

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I would like to comment on a couple of those submissions, namely, the rebate to landlords with a Trust for Nature covenant and to the many submitters who requested a separate rate category for retirement village owners. Personally, I see the merit in the submitters' case, but these matters need to be held over and considered in the 2024-25 Revenue and Rating Strategy Review, which is due for adoption before June 2025. I thank all residents who took the trouble to make a submission and as noted in the report, the officers will be providing written feedback to all submitters.

The framework of this Council Budget is very similar to that faced by most Australian families - constraints on the ability to increase income and at the same time, facing rising cost of living pressures and the prospects of an expanding family and a need to mend the roof and upgrade the drainage.

Rate capping below the rate of inflation, our commitment to an asset renewal program in one of the fastest-growing municipalities in the state provides budgetary challenges in the present and, in particular, for the future. This Budget predicts a net surplus of \$8.8 million that is largely the result of capital grants, the principal one being for the proposed Aquatic and Health Centre.

Rates will increase by 2.75%, the maximum allowed under the State Government's rate cap, which is really a handicap - as I repeat, it is lower than the inflation rate - and the State Government continues to mandate additional Council responsibilities and their control has now entered the domain of waste charges, which will be an additional handicap on future Council budgets and services.

Given this gloomy picture, I believe that this Budget reflects that our Council has maintained sound financial stewardship and is able to meet these challenges. Borrowings are well within local government prudential guidelines - and for those interested, they could go to section 5 in the report - and as stated in the June 20 media release, if there is a need to adjust our borrowing to proceed with the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre, it will be to a limit of \$6 million. This need is explained in the agenda item 6.1 following the outcome of the closed section.

The Budget must give effect to the Council plan and this Budget contains expenditure on priorities in the last year of that plan. Outlined in attachment 4.2.1 are descriptions of the many services and initiatives to be funded in the Budget and the prescribed indicators and measures of service performance.

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The Budget outlines a significant expenditure on capital works, \$41.4 million for ongoing works, including asset renewal, and \$11 million for new projects. Included are but not limited to a variety - a varied number of new initiatives - for example, Aireys Inlet Top Shop beautification planning, the Lorne Men's Shed carparking design, road safety projects. Karaaf Wetlands, stormwater management in Torquay, the planning and design of the Anglesea Community and Health Hub and the upgrade of Batson Street in Winchelsea.

I have always found a very useful snapshot is the chart that outlines how \$100 of expenditure is allocated to the seven themes in the plan. It is on page 36 of the Budget document. Following the chart is a detailed breakdown of the services and initiatives attached to the seven themes.

As I have said on many occasions and perhaps for the penultimate time as a Councillor, I am very proud of the profile that this Council has given to the arts and creative industries, elevating the sector as a distinct theme, a sector that is under-resourced nationally, but it is one that is so important to our welfare and sense of community. The report indicates an increase in funding to \$775,000 and includes the MAC redevelopment in Torquay, operational support to the Anglesea art space and the arts trail, an established event that benefits all communities within the shire, plus our grants program supports the many volunteer organisations who contribute to creative endeavour.

I wish to finally thank Gabby Spiller and her team for their professionalism and patience when dealing with the varied requests made by Councillors in the long lead-up to the adoption of the Budget and the calm manner --

CR PATTISON: I'll just ask you to finish up there, Councillor Allen.

CR ALLEN: Thank you. I've got one line to go.

CR PATTISON: Okay, go, thanks.

CR ALLEN: And the calm manner to which they approach the necessary adjustments that are made along the way. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Councillor Allen. Would you like to speak, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: I'll say a few words. Thank you, Mayor. So I was asked by a resident recently if the Council was broke. We're definitely not, but I guess the

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question stems from an acknowledgment and understanding that Council faces long-term challenges that require sound financial planning. In essence, this means that Council has to say no more often, which can be difficult when there are many passionate requests for funding of really worthy projects from people in our community.

We received 26 submissions from community members in relation to this year's Budget and although many of these cannot be implemented at this time, they have been flagged as a priority by community and some will be items that could be considered in future discussions and reviews. It's a good time to stop and reflect on the community's priorities, noting that Council delivers more than 100 services and maintains more than \$1 billion worth of community assets.

We have a growing population and millions of visitors to the Surf Coast every year who have increasing expectations for appropriate services and infrastructure. With rate capping set at 2.75% and the rising cost of materials and services, Council has to be careful with its spending. We can't just look at what our community needs now knowing that we have an obligation to provide for the community of the future.

A significant part of Council's financial commitment sits with our annual allocation to asset renewal to ensure that many of the facilities we use and enjoy now can be maintained and continue to be used and enjoyed in 10 years' time and beyond. We look at this more closely in an item later in tonight's agenda called Our Financial Story.

But it's definitely not all doom and gloom and Council is definitely not broke. We have a \$52 million capital expenditure program and another \$19.59 million allocated to renewal of community assets and facilities. There are exciting projects like the bike route from Duffields Road to Strathmore Drive, the Winchelsea Pool redevelopment, and the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre. There's the next stage of the MAC redevelopment and even some money for Aireys Inlet, with the allocation of \$70,000 to undertake detailed design work for improved streetscaping around the Top Shop precinct.

I'm pleased to see that the work on the Painkalac Creek flood mitigation will continue to get more attention with delivery of the Painkalac Coastal Inundation and Riverine Flood Study in the coming year, and in Anglesea the recent netball pavilion upgrade will be enhanced with a further \$1.3 million

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allocated to reconstruct the netball courts, which will include very important drainage and fencing improvements.

Finally, within the context of this spending, it's important to note that Council officers undertake a regular review of operations to identify savings and productivity improvements. Through three different business reform programs, the organisation has generated more than half a million dollars worth of savings in this Draft Budget, which is to be commended. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Stapleton. Would any other Councillors like to speak to the Budget? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. I just want people to have more choice on how they live and keep more of the money that they earn. This Budget does not facilitate that desire of mine. Additionally, I reflect on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. It appears we have a self-actualisation demand with barely a base needs Budget.

I've spoken ad nauseam about how money is spent and how it appears this organisation has an addiction to spending more and more of other people's money as time goes on. This results in the organisation getting bigger and bigger as we make more policy requiring us to do more. All this does is reduce the choices of what private landowners are able to do with their properties, continues an increase in the rates our residents and ratepayers are liable for, and grows the ratepayer-paid element of our community.

Now, our staff work their guts out, but they're paid very well through public funds that are not offered voluntarily like they would for people employed in the productive net paying private sector - net tax paying private sector. I advocate for a much smaller government that will get back to basics. If the continuation of the growth of the organisation was resulting in increases to public satisfaction, I might be inclined to support that direction, but it isn't and I won't.

The community satisfaction of our overall direction is less than 50%. That's a fail in my eyes. It is our worst performance on record and more of the same is only going to continue this downward trend of public support.

Additionally, this Budget is going to result in increased rates. I've been warning for some time that we are heading into recession and combined with inflation, that is only going to grow beyond what is forecast. I think it is not

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only economic lunacy to pass a Budget like this in these conditions, but it's also unfair, unjust and disrespectful to those in our community who are doing it so tough that even while working, they are relying on food aid to survive.

When people talk about the cost of living, we here in this chamber have a significant part to play. We can either add to the community's financial pressure or reduce it. This Budget adds to that pressure.

If we take a moment to consider the nine-figure Budget and how it's allocated, you'll see that it does little to address the worst element of community satisfaction, our unsealed roads. Like any organisation, we have many areas demanding our funds. We have increasing WorkCover costs, now around half a millions dollars; we have budgeted to pay the Library Corporation closer to \$1 million; and asset renewals continue to build up. And you'll notice that our backlog is low compared to other Councils, but using this benchmark is flawed. If it's our responsibility, we should be keeping it in tiptop shape.

Now, this vote gives Councillors an opportunity to vote against increasing rates and I welcome you to join me in doing so.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Would any other Councillors like to speak? Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Mayor. Thanks to the other Councillors for their words which have covered a lot of ground, so I've scrubbed out a lot of things that I was going to talk about, which leaves me free to talk about a few pet topics.

So I'm honing in here on some of the public submissions and I'd like to thank the submitters because we had a great range of really thoughtful public submissions, as Councillor Allen particularly talked about.

With regard to the potential sealing of Blackwood Lane in Aireys Inlet, which has been requested, I was a little bit troubled by the suggestion that a special charge scheme would be the only option to get that work done because we're talking about a place that's right in the heart of essentially the Aireys Inlet town centre, so there's a strong public amenity and safety argument in developing a better solution to that open space there and I don't think a special charge scheme in that case recognises the widespread public benefit that would flow from that.

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Another one is in relation to submission 22, which Mat's question this evening touched on as well. And in the discussion of draft submissions I talked about my own views on paid parking, where our application of a user pays principle through a huge list of user fees and charges doesn't include paid parking and our omission of that user pays principle in that case means that we have an unfair situation of private benefits being provided out of public costs, so the benefit being to the person parking their car, the cost of it being borne by all ratepayers, whether they drive cars or they don't.

And also the suggestion that paid parking is only to manage parking demand and congestion. Paid parking can address that unfair situation of user pays, or user doesn't pay in that case, but it's also one of the most significant factors in people's choices to drive say the average distance of 2km or to walk or ride. So paid parking is in fact a really powerful lever that we or a future Council could apply to changing or to helping with that mode shift from driving particularly short distances to walking and cycling. So I'm looking forward to a more sophisticated consideration of that issue in the future.

I was disappointed to see that we haven't funded an active transport officer in this Budget, but I do understand and I trust the team's judgment that a program engineer is going to help them deal with their overwork, with their very solid workload.

I'd like to talk about a few recurrent operational expenditure items, some really important ones, including water-sensitive urban design maintenance, which Councillor Wellington has been a particular advocate of, and proactive termite treatment. I can see I'm out of time, so I'll stop. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Bodsworth. Any other Councillors? Councillor Wellington?

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. I would like to support very much a number of the points that Councillor Barker made. I see this Budget as reflecting a direction of this Council which I don't believe the community supports and that direction is very much - you know, very much towards issues that, from my perspective, are state issues mainly - some federal, but mainly state - and we seem to be voluntarily assuming the obligation to take them on. One of them is housing.

Now, I very much was upset at the last Council meeting when Councillor Hodge I think said something about only people with empathy around the table

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sort of were supporting this Council's foray into housing policy. I think that that was a very unfortunate thing to say. I grew up in public housing and I very much understand the issue of housing instability and uncertainty and lack of security.

So it's not an issue of empathy. It's an issue about what this Council is collecting rates for and I believe when people sort of reluctantly put their hand in their pocket or write their cheque or get onto their computer and hand money over to Council that they're doing it in the belief that it ought to be spent on core services and investing in housing development or housing policy is not Council's role. If the State Government wishes us to help it implement its housing policy, it should fund us to do it.

We're funding, for example, a strategic initiatives housing coordinator in this Budget, previously funded through operating projects but now embedded in the Budget. We've put in a 31% increase over two years in expenditure from First Nations reconciliation. That's a very important point, as is housing, of course, a very important issue, but I've never had a resident in the whole time I've been a Councillor here in the shire, 12 years nearly, say to me, "Why aren't you doing more in this area?", and I know many people in the community strongly support First Nations reconciliation. It's not about the importance of the issue. It's about whether people's rates should be used to support this when the State Government hasn't invested in it properly.

We're putting in an extra 15% over two years in community health and development. It's not clear - some of that is focused towards gender equity and preventing violence against women, obviously again a critically important issue, but when people put their hand in their pockets, I don't think that's what they're expecting they're going to be paying for.

We've got a very modest increase in assets and engineering operating expenditure, a very modest increase in civil works. These are our core services. We have got a very minimal, not insignificant increase in maintenance of Council facilities. We know we've got problems in Winchelsea with termites and there's maintenance at Deans Marsh, we've had maintenance actually destroy - lack of maintenance effectively has left a historic building to the point where we've been told it's not repairable. You know, I don't think that's the community's expectation.

Unsealed road renewal has decreased capacity, unsealed shoulder renewal is unchanged. There's a whole lot of issues in this Budget that I really feel are

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taking us away from our core purpose and I don't think the community expects it should be paying for these things.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Wellington, if you could --

CR WELLINGTON: If I could just have an extension of time, please, Mayor Pattison.

CR PATTISON: Sure. I'll give you an extension for an extra 2 minutes, thanks, Governance.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. I just wanted to address the Wurdale CFA issue. The Wurdale CFA is run by volunteers, critically important in our community. They have got some real issues accessing their facility. They can't - they've got open drains outside, they've got volunteers' cars being bogged.

They put in a request for the drain to be undergrounded and a flat and accessible service to be developed over the drains and the road outside the station and somehow the officers' response has turned that into 600 and something metres of road sealing needed to be done. That wasn't what they were asking for and I believe it's an excessive sort of response to that. They're wanting some really modest works outside their station to support the large number of community volunteers who actually keep our community safe and I think that should have perhaps been looked at a bit differently and perhaps it can be included on the list of things that Councillor Stapleton alluded to that might still be there and need some more work and perhaps could be supported because what those people do is extraordinary and it's pretty demoralising for them to have their cars bogged when they're trying to do a volunteer job in the community. So that was the issue there that I wanted to talk about.

I won't be supporting this Budget. I think it's reflecting a direction in Council that I don't support and for that reason, I won't be supporting it tonight. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Thank you, Mayor. We've heard about big capital works, we've heard about recurring works. I'd just like to take two points of the Budget that I'd like to talk about and that's the healthy, connected communities. I think

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it's really important that we look at ourselves and what we are putting in the Budget to ensure that our social infrastructure, access to services and programs and strengthen our social connection - I think it's really important to have a mentally well, healthy community and to make sure that we include everyone.

We also have early year programs, youth services which are so important, library and the arts, all the sports, accessibility and inclusion, which is just so important. We see the community houses, the Men's Sheds, the senior citizens that all the shires support. We have thousands and thousands of volunteers to look after the work that they do throughout all our community sporting clubs. It's just huge works and we support those people.

So it's really important to me that we do have a Budget that gives grants and helps out people like that. Our grants contribution in this was over 50 community groups that we've helped out with volunteer support and enable them to do things in the community, things like the community house - I know that One Torquay today had a luncheon for people to connect them and there were over 80 people there, so that is the sort of thing I really like to see in a Budget that we're putting through and we are.

The other one I really want to talk about is the tourism events, community and the things that we sponsor. We live in an area that is - we have so many sporting bike groups and things that want to come down, but we've got to really look after our small businesses and so many people are in hospitality, so we've got to really try to make sure tourism is coming down and these events support our cafes, our small businesses because they're just so important.

Events help, as I said, our hospitality, but the grants events and some of the grants that we do we have international events, such as cycling and surfing, international that we help out and in the state we were the second largest pre-dawn service for the RSL and we give a lot of money to the RSL to ensure that this service can go ahead and that's really respectful of the returned service people.

We also have regional marathons, trails that bring down people and, as I said before, local things, like small things like Christmas carols and things that we put in. It might seem tiny in a Budget this big, but you know what, to me they're really, really important and I'm going to support this Budget because I know of the care that the officers and the Councillors go through this in all our Budget meetings, how many we've had is quite a few, to make sure that these

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people on the ground level are really looked after because that - who is our community and that is the fibre of our community is our wellbeing and I think these types of budgets, you can do the big things like the pools and everything, but sometimes it's the small supportive community groups that makes it so important to me. So I'll be supporting this Budget. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Hodge. Councillor Schonfelder, would you like to speak to the Budget?

CR SCHONFELDER: Yes, please, Mayor. I'd like to say that I support the general thrust of the Budget and I want to place on record that I am a very strong supporter of rate capping, I support having lower rates. I have met with residents who have told me that they have trouble buying food, they've told me that they're lucky if they're able to go out to see a film once a fortnight and I do feel for them and without rate capping, Councils would have the ability to ease rates further. So I just want to put that on the public record.

I concur with Councillor Wellington about Wurdale CFA and it was brought to my attention that Bellbrae CFA did have works carried out by the Council. I'm not sure whether the Council owns the property - sorry, where Bellbrae CFA is located because I know that what we're trying to do as an organisation is fund assets that we actually own, but I do agree that the volunteers do a wonderful job and it is of great concern having their vehicles bogged and I actually support having better roads full stop but also in particular surrounding CFAs because I know - I remember Ash Wednesday very clearly and I know that if some time can be saved with trucks going out to different incidences, that can save lives. Time is so critical.

With the pools, that's a great initiative that we're undertaking. Other councils are funding pools and other councils which are smaller than us don't have the grants that we have been given, so we are very fortunate in that regard.

I would like to just say that I am disappointed that our Council don't fund Christmas decorations to the extent that other councils do. I believe it has an impact on people's mental health and I have had people who have been suicidal who've contacted me and I've tried to lift their spirits and I just feel as though it's something that should be looked at in future in relation to Christmas decorations.

But overall, I'd like to thank the officers for the work they've done, and in relation to Batson Street in Winchelsea it's very exciting about the new type of

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drainage that's being implemented there. It's very scientifically advanced and it's a step in the right direction and I think it will be rolled out through our municipality. So I know you can't please all the people all the time, but I will be supporting this Budget draft. Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Schonfelder. Councillor Gazzard, would you like to speak?

CR GAZZARD: Thank you, Mayor. I'll support this Budget. I actually do have community members who are concerned about First Nations reconciliation and think it is a role for Council as well as supporting affordable housing, particularly with the cost of living crisis and relying on the state to do that may result in more development that is not in keeping with our town character. So I think it is a really vital role for Council to support appropriate development for affordable housing so that our community members can live where they want to live.

The main thing that I want to draw attention to after everyone else has obviously listed most things, but I'm really supportive of the grants, but also investment in children and our future and I'm really proud of the maternal and child health services and early years services that Council provide. Obviously roads are really important, but so are children and the health of our children really determines the next generation and investment in the early years pays off exponentially for school age and above.

So I am happy with how - obviously within the financial constraints that we have that we are trying to address lots of really important areas.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Did you have any closing remarks, Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor. Look, I accept Councillor Wellington's proposition that affordable housing is primarily a Federal and State Government responsibility. However, I respectfully disagree that the Council should have a role. I think it should have a role. It does have a role, particularly in land that the Council owns and the development of Council-owned land I think is a very important role that we can take.

I sort of think of our community as a body and at the centre of the body is the heart and our heart is a little bit diseased because particularly in our coastal

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towns we can't afford to house - or, sorry, our workers can't afford to find housing.

Now, the arteries are important, the arteries supply blood to the heart, but if the heart is diseased, we should do all in our power to try and help it pump. We've got triple bypass. We really have got triple bypass. We're trying our best to try to support the heart.

The little bit that we can do I think is important, I really do think it's very important, and the establishment of the affordable - the Council's affordable accommodation plan not only helps inform the work that we do, but it also helps inform our advocacy and so the money that we've spent on that officer really is very, very, very important.

I think Councillors generally support the Wurdale expenditure. We have discussed it, I don't think I'm breaking any confidences, as a Councillor-only topic. We have discussed it in those meetings and we are going to ask officers to rescope and look at that project, we are very supportive of doing something for the Wurdale people, and I certainly support what Councillor Gazzard said about young people and the importance of early childhood as I also recognise that as a really essential element of our spending.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And opposed? And the motion is carried 7-2.

We now have a confidential item to consider tonight. The confidential item relates to the tender for the Surf Coast Health and Aquatic Centre construction. While this information remains confidential due to commercial considerations which are detailed in the agenda, the recommendation in agenda item 6.1 (Draft Revised Budget 2024-25) cannot properly be considered until the confidential item has been first considered.

So it's not something we normally do and we try to avoid having confidential items in the body of the meeting, but in a moment I'm going to ask that we take a short break and when we return, the meeting will be closed to the public for a short period while we consider this item. Members of the public are more than welcome to wait in the foyer, where there's light refreshments, a cup of tea and a biscuit for you if you would like to then come back for the remainder of the meeting. The live stream will recommence and the public will be invited back into the Council chamber and online as soon as consideration of the confidential item has concluded.

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So Councillors, can I please have a motion to suspend standing orders for 10 minutes? Thank you - moved by Councillor Allen and seconded by Councillor Hodge. All those in favour. And opposed? No opposed. The motion is carried unanimously. So we'll now have a break for 10 minutes. If the people in the gallery could make yourself a cup of tea and a biscuit, that would be wonderful and we will continue on.

(Short break)

CR PATTISON: Welcome back to those that are joining us online and back in the gallery. Thank you for waiting it out while we addressed that confidential item.

So we'll now come back with item 6.1, Draft Revised Budget 24-25. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement to place the Draft Revised Budget 24-25 on public exhibition. This has been requested to support the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre. We have a recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion? Councillor Bodsworth - is that as per the recommendation?

CR BODSWORTH: Yes, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, and seconded by Councillor Gazzard. Would you like to speak to that, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. I need to collect my thoughts because I wasn't necessarily preparing to move this one, but I'm happy to.

CR PATTISON: Thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: So having passed the previous confidential motion, we do need to now discuss a revised Budget that takes into account the financial implications of the previous item. So essentially the change from the Budget item that we discussed earlier tonight is minimal and it relates to points taking into account the financial implications of the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre spending.

I don't think I'm going to go on about it. I'm going to leave it at that. I'm happy to move that we pass the draft revised Budget.

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I might while I'm talking actually refer to one item which I didn't mention before, if you'll indulge me, which is the Anglesea art space. Councillor Allen mentioned it before. Spending on that is going up. It's continually going up because we're renting a shop in Anglesea. The Anglesea McMillan Street Hub Project offers us an opportunity to accommodate a community gallery or art space in that development. So I take this opportunity to encourage Councillors to think about that as we move forward with that project.

I'm excited about getting on with the aquatic centre if we can do so and so I recommend that we accept this revised Budget.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Bodsworth. And just to clarify, the revised Budget only relates to the change for the Surf Coast Aquatic Centre, just to ensure that we're not confusing anybody watching. But yes, obviously the gallery is very important. Councillor Gazzard, would you like to speak to the motion?

CR GAZZARD: Thank you. It's with excitement that we have voted to pursue the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre and I commend the officers and the contractors for working towards value management around this.

I suppose the significant thing for the community is quite a big change to our debt level, which is on page 163 of the agenda, which does look slightly alarming, but we've been assured is manageable and as I said in the previous motion, this is an investment in our community and the health of our community to get a pool in the Surf Coast, so happy to move.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak?
Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor. As a result of the decision made a few moments ago to accept the next step for the construction of the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre, I'm inclined to support the changes to the Budget resulting from the need to find additional resources to fund the aquatic and health hub. However, I will be very interested in the community's response to the revised Draft Budget when it is discussed in our communities.

It is very difficult to ignore close to \$37 million in Commonwealth and State grants, plus the interest earned from the grant funds totalling \$2.2 million. This opportunity is very unlikely to occur again. Plus with our projected population growth, it will be an asset well used.

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There is also the extended market that the centre will service with the shelving of the Armstrong Creek pool, which will add potential income from membership sales.

However, it comes with an increase in the cost - namely, a higher debt and industry payment and the associated opportunity cost of what we forgo to service the debt, which is \$432,000 per year. Noted in this report is that \$7,850,000 will be provided from the Council's resources. Again, this involves forgone expenditure on other priorities.

The funding model discusses value-added management and additional grants and philanthropic contributions. These are not guaranteed.

I also note that the Torquay industry community, who will gain the greatest benefit, has made a zero contribution to the facility, unlike the Lorne community, for example, which was required - I'll say again, required - to raise \$350,000 for the Stribling Reserve Pavilion and required to raise half the cost of the facade for the Lorne Historical Society, amounting to \$50,000, an organisation of a small number of volunteers. I question the equity in our approach to infrastructure provision between our communities within the municipality. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Thanks, Mayor. So it is unusual for Council to be considering a revised draft Budget on the same night it has endorsed the Budget for 2024-25, but unfortunately it has been explained, it is necessary. We need to give the community an opportunity to consider this draft revised Budget and provide feedback, which will take four weeks, but obviously we also need to have an approved Budget in place while this process takes place. Therefore, the proposal before us to borrow funds could not be included in the Budget that we've just approved.

The reason for the draft revised Budget is to propose borrowings of up to \$6 million to help cover the cost of project increases for the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre. It's not an ideal position to be in, but it's the reality of the current market and the financial challenges being faced in construction of facilities of this size and nature at this point in time.

Right now we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver an aquatic facility for this community. Including interest, we have almost \$40 million in

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funding from State and Federal Government, an amount that is unlikely to be secured again in the future. Compared to what other Councils often need to contribute to building pools and other pieces of infrastructure of this size in their community, I would say that Surf Coast is in an enviable position given the limited amount we're being asked to invest to realise a facility of such importance for our growing community.

As we all know, the community has advocated for a pool for more than 20 years. Let's not let this opportunity slip past at the eleventh hour. This project can still be delivered with a combination of external funding and Council funding, but is now also dependent on Council borrowings, as proposed here. We know there is capacity in the long-term financial plan to fund the debt servicing costs of such a loan through reduction of discretionary allowances. This may mean that other projects in Torquay, which will please Councillor Allen, may need to be deferred or funded differently.

I also think it's reasonable to borrow money knowing that future generations will share the financial burden of the pool that they will no doubt also enjoy. It is proposed that the borrowings, along with interest, will be repaid over 25 years.

And although up to \$6 million of borrowings is being proposed, that is the maximum amount and may not be what is ultimately required. Council is still negotiating with its preferred tenderer through value management in an effort to reduce the cost through the removal or simplification of items that will only have a minimal effect to the project outcomes.

Council will also continue to seek external funding and we know that the Mayor has written to the State Government regarding the uncertainty of the Armstrong Creek pool and the implications for Surf Coast Shire if it is to service a wider catchment with its own aquatic facility. The proposed borrowings align with Council's borrowing policy for a facility of strategic significance which can't be fully funded from normal revenue streams.

So I endorse this draft revised Budget and I do look forward to hearing back from the community with their thoughts on it. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. No other Councillors? Councillor Bodsworth - were you wanting to speak, Councillor Barker? Oh, Councillor Wellington, sure.

CR WELLINGTON: Oh, sorry, was someone speaking?

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CR PATTISON: No, no, that's fine. I didn't see your hand.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. Look, the community perhaps know that I haven't supported this investment in the past because I think it's unaffordable for us. I know there's lots of Councils that have run into problems with pools over the years in terms of ongoing operating deficits and, you know, they can become an absolute burden around the Council's neck.

I just want to remind the community - well, the first thing I'd like to say is that I've heard several times tonight that there's community support for this pool. I think that there is mixed - there are mixed views in the community. The only - as far as I know, the only sort of systematic assessment we made of community views was several years ago now and there was strong support within the immediate Torquay area, but certainly across the shire the support waned as people were further away and there are many people in the shire who don't support this pool at all. So I think we need to be, you know, really transparent about the level of that support.

In March 24, according to our website, the cost of the pool was \$46 million. People will have read today that there's - and as a result of the previous item Council needs to borrow an additional \$6 million. I just want to say to the community and a couple of Councillors too, Councillor Stapleton said that's a contribution to the gap and I want to make the point really clearly it is only - don't assume that the additional cost is only another 6 million because there are other mechanisms that are indicated in this report for trying to make up the gap, including, obviously, redirecting money from other Council projects, and that won't just be Torquay projects and it won't just be capital projects, no doubt. There will be a scramble if we need to - if the Council needs to allocate more internal funds to this and eventually the cost of this pool will become obvious, no doubt, to the community. But don't assume that it is just \$46 million plus 6. That may not be correct.

I don't support this. I don't think we can afford this. I think the burden on the shire in the environment of rate capping is going to be enormous. The diversion of funds from other very important core business is going to be enormous and, you know, while it's very attractive to have the Federal and State Government dangle this money in front of us, if we can't afford it, we can't afford it and we shouldn't be doing it and that is my view, so I won't support this. Thank you.

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CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Schonfelder, would you like to speak?

CR SCHONFELDER: Yes, please, Mayor. I'd like to highlight the fact that for the last three to four years our Council has been retiring debt and we've retired in excess of over \$2 million worth of debt and that's something that we should be applauded for.

Our population is growing. The State Government have recently announced that they'd like an extra 7,800 dwellings in our municipality. That will be increased rate revenue in the future. And to be very honest, the majority of the population live in Torquay and in some ways Torquay actually subsidises other parts of the shire and I feel that this pool is a way of giving back to the whole community, but also, in particular, the Torquay community because so many people commute from Torquay to other pools at Waurm Ponds and further afield and I think that there are people in Anglesea who swim every week at Leisurelink at Waurm Ponds and they said to me they prefer to travel a shorter distance.

It hasn't been mentioned tonight about the Commonwealth Games being cancelled and about the fact about the pool that was to be built at Armstrong Creek. Those residents there will probably use our pool as well and I believe that we'll be at capacity and I believe we will actually earn more money than what we are perhaps forecasting.

I do actually think in Victoria's history the amount of money that our Council is contributing towards this in total is the least that's ever happened previously. I know the State Government did fund the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre and that was for the Commonwealth Games. That might be an exception to this. But we're very fortunate that we have over \$30 million contributed from state and federal grants towards this project and I'll be supporting this change to the draft Budget.

I've always supported the pool. I know we do have to live within our means, but I would actually love to have a pool in every town, to be honest, because it's preventative medicine. I'm not medically trained, but I know the amount of money government spend on the health sector is enormous and I believe it's better if people are more active and people in this area in Torquay will be able to walk and cycle to the pools because it's much closer for them. I believe it will encourage them to participate. I also think there are a lot of great mental health benefits as well that stem from having this facility.

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It is within our remit. Other Councils are planning on building pools and spending more money than what we are spending and they're smaller Councils than ours. Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. Point 37, breadth and level of council services exceeds Council's financial capacity. Inherent risk rating serious. Why this point wasn't front and centre of this report disappoints me greatly, but there's a lot to consider.

These risks are based on current assumptions, assumptions which I think are inadequate. We've seen the Australian money supply more than triple over the last five years. This is a key driver of inflation. The inflation we're seeing at the moment isn't even a ripple on the surface compared to the tsunami coming for us.

As we've seen with previous decisions by this Council, even if there's significant public opposition to this, which there won't be because people in our community are too busy dealing with the rising costs of living and increasing regulatory hurdles they have to negotiate at work to have the time to understand what this draft revised Budget means, let alone the economic impact it will have for them and their families.

The media release on this topic states it means future generations can help fund facilities they'll use. To me what that actually means is that those who weren't able to have a say in the decision are liable to pay for it in the future, whether they support it or not. To me that's not fair.

I'm quite certain that the intention to source external funding will fall on deaf ears as our actions and that of the State Government are making those with significant money to not want to spend it with us or in the region, but I'd love to be proven wrong and invite those in our region who I've not spoken to that manage capital that could assist the final piece of this puzzle to make themselves known to Councillors or the executive to discuss how that would work.

We have over \$100 million in investments. If we need funds, I'll first support drawing down on these funds before any borrowings. Given increasing interest rates, committing to any more borrowings is going to have a detrimental impact on our long-term finances.

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I will not support this motion as even officers know that this recommendation places the organisation under substantial financial risk.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Yes, just very quickly, Councillor Stapleton said it was a 20-year journey. I think it's actually longer than that. I think it was in the 60s that the pool was first mooted here many, many years ago. There was even a want of an ocean pool down in Fishos and of course that didn't go ahead.

This has been an extremely long road with a lot of community input and as I sort of - we've got funds for it, we've got the land, and if we can under the borrowings of the money that we're going to borrow get a pool of this size for the community (inaudible) if we have to make up a little bit more, that is still a bargain. That is an absolute bargain compared with all the money we're getting through grants.

We will never get it again. This community deserves a pool. Parents are sick of taking their children into Geelong. It's much better to do it locally and I'm sure it will be at capacity with people from Anglesea as well and other surrounds. Torquay has been sacrificed as the growth node for many, many years and we've had many, many big developments here. I think the people that went for this years ago and all the communication we need, you know, you look at Winchelsea, they're having a pool and I think that's absolutely fantastic.

This will be one as an indoor pool for many people and I'm looking forward to all the schools wanting to use it. I think it will be at capacity. And as I said, if we can get this pool with this loan and what we've got for it before, if other things have to go on the ice for a little while, let's just do this, get it finished. It's been a long journey and then I'm sure we'll be able to look at what the community needs in further budgets of what other areas need, other townships need, and make sure that equity does occur, as we've seen in the wonderful things what's happening at Winch, Lorne and Stripling Reserve, Anglesea and areas.

But I think Torquay, it's time for this to go ahead. We've got a population, we're going to be over 30,000 people. Let's stop the kids going into Geelong and as Councillor Gazzard said, let's make sure our beaches and Our nippers are safe with all these children learning how to swim and that's without people

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with disabilities coming into the warm pool rather than having to travel and I think this will be just an absolutely wonderful asset for this community. Alright, there might have to be some cuttings here and there, but overall, I think for health, for wellbeing and just for safety, I think it will be a terrific facility. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Do you have any closing comments, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Just a couple, thanks, Mayor. So thanks to Councillors for the debate on this item. Councillor Barker raised the strategic risk, breadth and level of Council services exceeds Council's financial capacity, which there's another strategic risk which I think is in tension with that and that's at the heart of this debate, which is failure to plan and deliver infrastructure and services which keep pace with growth and I think - I mean, I agree with the Councillors who've raised concerns about this, about opportunity costs and about the potential for people in other parts of the shire to feel like they're not getting value for money and may not support this spending, but I think the tension between those two strategic risks is at the heart of that and whilst some Councillors might conclude from that tension that it's not worth going ahead with this, my conclusion is that it's worth going ahead with this and as I said earlier on, I'm all for it. So let's go.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Bodsworth. We'll now put the motion to a vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. And the motion is carried 7-2.

We'll now move on to item 6.2, Planning Scheme Review. This report relates to the Surf Coast Planning Scheme review 2024 and the planning scheme amendment that seeks to implement the review.

CR GAZZARD: Could I move that we have a small break?

CR PATTISON: My only concern is that our audiences have already had a large period of time where we were doing the confidential items. So I was thinking that we do at least one or two more and then have a break because they have already been waiting for quite some time. So would people be alright with that? Yes, alright, thanks.

So 6.2, Planning Scheme Review. This report relation to the Surf Coast Planning Scheme Review and the planning scheme amendment that seeks to

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implement the review. Council's support is sought to adopt the review and forward it to the Minister For Planning in accordance with section 12B(5) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and to give approval to seek authorisation to prepare and exhibit a planning scheme amendment to implement the review. We have a recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion? Councillor Stapleton - is it as per the recommendation?

CR STAPLETON: Yes, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. And a seconder? Councillor Hodge, thank you. Would you like to speak, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: I will, thanks, Mayor. So a Planning Scheme Review is essentially a health check of the Planning Scheme and it's primarily a technical review to assess the performance of the scheme and identify any recommendations for areas of change.

The scope of this review is clearly defined by the Planning and Environment Act and this review has been undertaken in the context of concurrent work that officers have been undertaking on the Urban Futures Strategy, which will be discussed next on tonight's agenda, as well as acknowledgment of the distinctive areas and landscapes statement of planning policy and the impact that this will have on the current Planning Scheme's ability to accommodate future urban growth.

The review was undertaken over most of last year and went out for community consultation and input from October to December. Those who engaged with the process indicated strong support for the priorities that were identified, but it's important to note that as a result of the community submissions we received, the Planning Scheme Review was strengthened to include discussion around the importance of biodiversity, the Marine and Coast Act, the coastal character engagement process that was undertaken by Council last year, housing affordability and diversity, and preserving our dark skies.

The review broadly indicates that the Planning Scheme on the Surf Coast is working well and states that the Surf Coast Shire has got an excellent handle on the issues that are coming up through the permit application process.

Having said that, it's also noted that the time taken to process planning permits had increased slightly. While it is important to monitor these timeframes, it is within the context of understanding that planning officers

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have been focusing on getting better decisions through collaboration and consultation, which can also lead to reduced VCAT appeals. It's therefore understandable that some of these decisions may take longer than the prescribed timeframes, but we're not aware of any formal complaints in relation to this.

The Planning Scheme Review identifies six areas for further strategic work which are considered the highest priority tasks for Council to undertake over the next four years in order to improve the Planning Scheme. These priorities are to finalise the Urban Futures Strategy, which will show how growth can be accommodated in the municipality; to prepare a new strategic plan for Winchelsea, including preferred future growth of the township; prepare further detailed work for Torquay to identify the location, form and density of growth for areas identified for urban growth; prepare infrastructure plans in response to planned growth; plan for and improve resilience to climate change and other environmental risks; and finally, to review the planning controls for each coastal township from Anglesea to Lorne to ensure that the best suite of controls has been applied to retain the coastal township character that's so highly valued and the preferred form of housing, while also managing bushfire risk.

These six projects represent a huge amount of work, but will position Council so that it can deal with the population growth and climate change and other environmental risks that the Surf Coast community must address.

There are another five recommendations for areas of further strategic work, which I won't go through and you can have a look at in the agenda report, but I'd just like to note that one of those is to update flood mapping, including climate change coastal flooding, and although much of this work will need to be led by the State Government, it will need to be incorporated into our Planning Scheme at some stage and I know it's of particular interest and importance to our coastal communities. So hopefully this work can be prioritised as part of the overarching priority to plan for and improve resilience to climate change.

While on the subject of climate change, within the recommendations for Planning Scheme amendments is the introduction of a new environmentally sustainable development policy which would apply to residential and non-residential development excluding subdivisions, and while my preference would be to see that it was extended to include subdivisions, I understand that

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the strategic work required for this has not been undertaken and would require significant investment.

However, the good news is that Council is a member of CASBE, which is the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environment, who have been doing a lot of work in this space and I understand that the current status would not preclude Council from considering sustainability at a strategic level when there is future subdivision design and will certainly be a focus in future place planning in locations like Winchelsea and the Messmate growth area of Torquay, which are both earmarked for future subdivisions.

There are many other items of interest in the Planning Scheme Review, but one can only cover so much in the allocated time, so I'll leave it there for tonight. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Stapleton. Councillor Hodge, would you like to speak?

CR HODGE: Well, I've just wiped off half, but thank you, Councillor Stapleton. That was a very precise five minutes. Well done.

I remember being a part of the last Planning Scheme Amendment, it was 2014, so it's well into to be done, and that was C102, by memory, and also it's been held up over the years with the DEL process when it was due to be looked at in 2018 and of course COVID slowed everything down as well.

But it is a chance to review and provide opportunity to align any new Council policies, position in the Planning Scheme and remove the redundant information and update and put in any more of the things that the community have fed in. The three objectives were safeguarding life and property; protecting native vegetation - I think that's the one that resonates right throughout the shire; and also which doesn't resonate sometimes throughout the shire is the 15 years of urban growth that usually needs to be in a Planning Scheme to make it functional in the eyes of the Victorian Government.

So I'd like to thank the people that put into it. It has been a long time coming and I think this Council has really worked well to get this done and thank you to the planning officers that have worked through this rather large document to upgrade it and to certainly make it put more life into where we want to go in the future strategic plans. Thank you.

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CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thank you. I cannot vote for endorsing this review. It's a stranglehold on those who seek to do what they want with their own land. At a time when housing options are limited, agricultural activities are challenged in ways that may be hindered by the scheme and the main beneficiaries of this will be the consultants, who after identifying the enormous regulatory obstacle that most can't negotiate themselves have positioned themselves to profit off this hindrance, it's up to the State Government and this Council to make it easier for people to do what they want or make it harder.

All of these regulations simply make it harder and anyone who has concerns about housing affordability, who supports regulation that makes housing costs more are not being philosophically consistent with their desire to get more affordable housing. The key driver of housing costs are regulations. Whether they're planning, tax, HR, whatever it is, if you seek to interfere in the market, it's going to result in a negative outcome with regards to affordability.

Now, all the power to the consultants who make money off this. The conditions are set by us and the State Government and because they are so onerous, most people can't deal with it themselves and because of the value applied by consumers who pay these consultants, they are just making money for jam and the net outcome to the positive evolution of society in my eyes is stagnated. I won't be supporting the motion.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak? Councillor Wellington?

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. Look, planning has been a really big focus for me in the 12 years that I've been on council and I've seen many disputes between neighbours which need to be regulated by the Planning Scheme because if people can just do what they like on their land without consideration of their neighbours, you are inevitably going to end up with social problems and with amenity problems and with all sorts of problems.

So I don't accept that view - to me the plan is an absolutely critical document which generally produces a reasonable outcome when there are questions about what land can be used for and what it can't be used for. My experience of the Planning Scheme is that generally when it's properly interpreted it provides a sensible framework within which people can use their land and

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exploit their land and enjoy their land without impinging unnecessarily on the amenity or the rights of their neighbours and I just think that there's got to be a balance of that.

I think this Planning Scheme Review, it's actually a very extensive document. It's more than housekeeping. It's really significant. The need for a strategic - a very clear strategic plan for Winchelsea is even greater now with the increase in population projections by 2050, so ensuring that that happens in a really carefully thought through strategic framework so that the character and charm of Winchelsea does not get lost through acres and acres and acres of development.

I've been taking the train a bit lately in coming down through the western parts of Melbourne and honestly, the development up there and the homogeneity of it and the lack of trees and the - oh, my goodness, it's not what we want. I think the community is generally very welcoming and accepting of development, but it needs to be good development and the Planning Scheme is going to be really critical in governing that.

I think there are some anomalies that aren't mentioned in this report. The biggest one to me is the development of retirement villages in low-density residential areas is an anomaly and I believe that needs to be addressed. I think we've seen that with Cypress Lane. That's intended to be a minimal change, low-density area and we now have a significant - you know, a really significant density retirement village. We've got another one I saw in the press announced today, we've got another one in Briody West, we've got - you know, Torquay is an endlessly attractive area for people to retire to through retirement villages. So we need to think about that and I think we should be talking to government about that.

There's reference in all of this to affordable housing. My view is that there needs to be a much clearer definition of what that means, but also what the role of Councils is in that. It worries me that individual Planning Schemes may be amended without a proper statewide framework and policy for that. I think, where possible, there should be a statewide framework so it's predictable in different areas and with local overlays and amendments and things to sort of take care of local circumstances.

But I'm hoping that we don't have a whole lot of Councils that are keen on particular policy directions that amend their Planning Schemes and get

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permission to do that accordingly. But generally I think this is a really good document --

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Wellington. If you could wind up, that would be great.

CR WELLINGTON: -- (inaudible) thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Schonfelder, would you like to speak?

CR SCHONFELDER: Yes, please. I think that the State Government does mandate our organisation to carry this out. So given that the Surf Coast region was recently declared a distinctive area and landscape which was pursuant to section 46A of the Planning and Environmental Act 1987, the Surf Coast Statement of Planning Policies (inaudible) proposed landscape planning controls primarily affect land in and around Torquay. The Minister intends to prepare amendments to the Surf Coast Planning Scheme to reflect the inclusion of the statement of planning policy in the Victorian planning provisions.

I do concur with what Councillor Wellington has just said, I believe that retaining amenity, retaining a small town feel is so important and I have travelled many times on the train up to Melbourne and I've been horrified by the appearance of the developments adjacent to the railway line because I felt that there should be some vegetation in that area and I hope that when Winchelsea grows we have better planning introduced in relation to that. I look forward to seeing the updating of this Planning Scheme. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Stapleton, do you have any closing remarks?

CR STAPLETON: Yes, I'll just say a couple of things. So the review also points to some things that are super important to consider in the context of the Planning Scheme but generally beyond the scope of what Council can achieve, but the review does point out the opportunity for Council to advocate to the State Government for change on three particular issues and these include planning controls around short-term accommodation. Contrary to Councillor Barker's suggestions that an unregulated market might lead to better outcomes, we can see the impact that short-term accommodation has had locally on housing.

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The other advocacy positions are to strengthen consideration of environmentally sustainable design and development and climate change and there has been some discussion around the currency of data that is being relied on for decision making around this and the importance of making sure that Councils can rely on the most up-to-date data when making these decisions. And finally, to include more context about the need to recognise, conserve and promote Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Thank you to fellow Councillors for your comments and pointing out the importance of the Planning Scheme, which I know many of us do value and, yes, I commend this item to you. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. And the motion is carried 8-1.

If people will indulge me, we'll do the Urban Futures Strategy and then have a break. I'm just conscious of those watching online. So the Draft Urban Futures Strategy. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the Draft Urban Futures Strategy and supporting documents for the purpose of public exhibition. We have a recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion? Councillor Allen - is that as per the recommendation?

CR ALLEN: Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And a seconder? Councillor Bodsworth. Would you like to speak, Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thank you. Importantly, the Urban Futures Draft Strategy will, if the recommendation is accepted, go on public exhibition and consultation for a period of eight weeks. This will be the second phase in our community engagement process. It is a framework for urban growth, referring to all townships within our shire boundary. It is therefore a very important strategy as we have a statutory obligation in the Planning Scheme to set out a plan for a 15-year supply of residential land for the municipality.

Crucial factors in determining a medium- to long-term guide to land use planning are predicted population growth; the available land zone for urban residential use; where forecast growth can occur; the future role of towns; and the housing needs in the municipality.

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What is the projected population growth over the next 15 years? Victoria in future 2023 projects that the shire will continue to grow strongly between 2021 to 36 by 1.6% per annum, an increase of 10,400 people to over 48,000 residents by 2036. The key driver of demand for additional housing in the Surf Coast will continue to be the strong population growth of Melbourne and Geelong. Greater Geelong is predicted to grow by close to 100,000 people over this time, thus pushing residents into the affordable and accessible corridor between Winchelsea to Torquay.

It is therefore essential that we begin the conversations about how much dwelling growth that Winchelsea and district can accommodate. We must plan for a sustainable Winchelsea community. There is an immediate need to increase the zone stocks of residential land and a need to identify suitable land to meet anticipated medium- to long-term housing needs and to meet State Government requirements in the growth corridor.

The draft strategy recognises that the outward growth of Torquay is constrained and opportunities to increase housing are limited to the existing identified greenfield land primarily located within the future urban area on Messmate Road and to infill opportunities in areas within the town boundaries identified in the distinctive areas and landscapes statement of planning policy so familiar to us through the Protect Spring Creek campaign.

To my mind, Torquay is a juggling act. We wish to maintain the unique township character, particularly along the esplanade and Torquay's surrounding landscape. Yet we must plan for the housing needs to meet the demands of a growing population looking for diverse housing options.

Our coastal townships have limited growth potential, but the townships of Anglesea, Aireys Inlet and Lorne framed by natural splendour of great Otway National Park and the iconic Great Ocean Road. The draft strategy recognises the bushfire and environmental constraints of the coastal towns, which restrict the opportunity for urban growth through both outward expansion and significant infill.

Housing diversity, availability and affordability are recognised as challenges in the coastal towns. Further, directions may well focus on encouraging smaller dwelling types. A major difficulty in providing affordable housing opportunities is the identification of suitable future sites.

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The rural townships of Deans Marsh and Moriac, due to servicing and environmental constraints, will not play a significant role in meeting future land supply needs for the municipality. I believe that the communities have clearly expressed their desire to maintain the unique character of both hinterland townships.

Engagement to phase 2 will provide an opportunity for community members to provide feedback on the draft strategy. The engagement will be undertaken from 1 July to 26 August and will include targeted sessions with identified community groups that we engage with in phase 1, community information sessions in Torquay and Winchelsea and by way of an online submission portal.

I wish to thank the enormous amount of work that has gone into the preparation of this document. Thank you to Kate Sullivan and her team. With the preparation for the Planning Scheme review as well as this document, it's an enormous amount of work and this is a vital piece of work and I encourage residents to provide us with feedback. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. And Councillor Bodsworth, would you like to speak?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. So yes, I also highly recommend that we endorse this Draft Urban Futures Strategy for public review and comment. I'm glad to see an eight-week response period. It's a fitting long response period for such a big piece of work which has behind it a number of very large pieces of work that the Councillors preparing for tonight's meeting would have no doubt read very thoroughly.

A huge amount of work and particularly the engagement summary report for both the Planning Scheme Review and Urban Futures Strategy provides a really interesting perspective on community attitudes, particularly to issues like density. To me, and I guess for people who are going to review this draft, I'd encourage - well, Councillors and members of the public reviewing this draft to consider what I see as a missing piece of this work which is recognising the relationship between urban development patterns and financial sustainability.

So density - we talked a lot about density. We can see from the engagement summary that there's a lot of community unease about density and yet we see from State Government policies that there's a very strong State Government push towards density and higher housing diversity. And I want to read out a quote from some work from the City of Melville in Perth recently relating to the

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connection between urban development patterns and density and financial sustainability: "Currently costs across local governments are rising faster than revenue" - we've heard about that in Our Financial Story - "raising concern that the ability for local Governments to invest in and create great places for the community will be heavily constrained. In the future, local governments may need to be less reliant on government funding programs to remain financially sustainable and look at what they might be able to do themselves by undertaking economic modelling across their planning framework."

So what that's driving at is that there's a difference in the return on investment or the value that is derived from particularly different densities, but also different mixes of use. So single use zoning at a low density returns a much lower revenue return per hectare than mixed use zoning at a higher density and so unless we understand the relationship between density and mixed use and the financial sustainability of those neighbourhoods, we're missing a really important piece of this urban futures puzzle. It's something that I'm really going to be encouraging us to look at in the future and I hope it comes through in comments on the draft.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak to this motion? Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Thank you, Mayor. Last week on Thursday and Friday I attended along with other Councillors the Municipal Association of Victoria Rural and Regional Planning Conference and it was quite interesting that our shire, the Surf Coast Shire, is similar to Bass Coast Shire, Mornington Peninsula Shire, the Yarra Ranges, Macedon Ranges Shire in relation to that we have the distinctive area landscapes and we want to have job growth and employment growth, but we don't want unreliable developments because we want to retain the amenity and retain the distinctive landscapes (inaudible) as well as agricultural land as well.

I'd like to just advocate very strongly for the importance of agriculture because I know in the Greater Geelong area, the G21 area, agriculture is more than 10% of the total economy and it's worth more than over \$1 billion. And I do think that, in hindsight, the development that has taken place in Victoria, prime agricultural land and areas of very high soil quality have been developed and I know houses have been referred to as the last and final crop and I think that we need to have more of an environment with a sustainable lens when it comes to development. I also know that Also first Nations people, their significance with certain landscapes is so important.

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I'd also like to mention that the population of Victoria at the moment is about 7 million, forecasting to grow another 1.2 million at the municipal conference in the next 10 years. I would say that the Surf Coast, along with the other Councils that I mentioned, we are not obliged to accommodate the growth perhaps as much as some other municipalities because of the high value of the distinctive landscapes that we have and the importance of farming as well and the importance of maintaining green wedges. I believe that's in people now more so than ever given the development in the western part of Melbourne as well in the City of Wyndham and other municipalities and also the City of Greater Geelong. Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. This strategy, like others, seeks to control how people use their own land. I think that those who support this line of thinking are doing so because they know best. Why else would you support it?

In doing so, we allocate the finite resources we have to areas that I personally consider irrelevant. If someone wants to do something with their property and they have the support of their neighbours, I see no reason why we should oppose it, unless, of course, it causes harm to another. I have faith that people are inherently good, considerate and thoughtful and can navigate life themselves and don't need the burden of government limiting their opportunities and charging them fees in doing so.

Supporting this motion will come at a cost and it's just less opportunity for others and less opportunity for the rest of the shire. I've said it before and I'll say it again, the lack of opposition through public engagement processes does not give community endorsement. All it shows is that people are too busy to engage with Council and any support that does come as a result will just be from a small cohort and it doesn't give us a mandate to carry it out on top of everything else that we do.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Councillor Allen, did you have any closing remarks - oh, sorry, Councillor Wellington?

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. I just wanted to comment. This is very much related to the Planning Scheme Review as well, some of the issues are simpler.

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But honestly if everyone acted with goodwill, I don't think I'd have much to do as a Councillor really because a lot of the time that I've been spending in the last decade or so in relation to community sort of issues is about planning and about communities not getting on with each other around what needs to be done with planning and you need a framework to sort that out and I strongly support the Planning Scheme doing that.

The focus of Winchelsea is very welcomed and it is really critical that we get a good township framework there for the growth of the town. It's absolutely substantial growth. I don't think people - I'm thinking here it says something like (inaudible) people by 2050. In Winchelsea the figures that are known are 10,000 by 2050, an aspirational target, but there are alternative growth projections in this Urban Futures Strategy which talk about 18,500 people by 2051. So that's almost double the growth that Winchelsea has been thinking about and accommodating and adjusting to. So it's critical that we do this well.

There is a real problem with the primary school in Winchelsea and that is important in that sort of major community infrastructure well planned. It can't be overstated. Not only do we need sort of vague lines on that about where we might go, but we actually need land to be reserved and really firm lines on that about what's going to be developed in particular areas so that the sort of pivotal infrastructure for the community is in place and then the development can occur around it.

I think - I hope I'm not getting these items mixed up, but there is a focus on heritage sites, which I really strongly support. I've had some concern that we've done quite a bit of work on identifying heritage sites, again citation, but then we haven't maintained them and we haven't put the resources in and some of the financial decisions we have made recently and are continuing to make even tonight are going to make that challenging. So if we're going to value heritage, we need to not only study it and get the citations in place and recognise it, but we actually need to maintain those buildings and stop them from deteriorating to the point where they can't be replaced or renewed.

Yes, I also just wanted to say I think the consultation period is appropriate. There's a massive amount of information to get through with this and we need to give the community the courtesy of time to do that and I think we're going to be fine, so I support that. Thank you.

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CR PATTISON: Thank you. Do you have any closing remarks, Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Oh, just that I'd also like to observe that, sadly, I think people are inherently greedy and act in self-interest, look around the world, and it necessitates some form of regulation.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And opposed. And the motion is carried 8-1.

We will now have a short break, so can I have a motion to suspend standing orders? Moved by Councillor Stapleton and seconded by Councillor Bodsworth. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously. We'll now break for 15 minutes. So it's 8.35 and we'll come back at 8.50. Thank you to those watching online.

(Short break)

CR PATTISON: Well, thank you, everybody. We'll now resume our Council meeting. Can I have a mover and a seconder to resume Standing Orders? Moved by Councillor Allen and seconded by Councillor Hodge. All those in favour. The motion is carried unanimously.

So we now move on with our Council meeting. We're at item 6.4, Our Financial Story. The purpose of this report is for Council to receive the updated version of Council's Our Financial Story document and financial principles. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Allen - as per the recommendation?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And seconded by Councillor Stapleton. Would you like to speak, Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thank you. In June 2020, the Council received the first version of Our Financial Story. The purpose of the document was to outline the important principles that underpin the development of our annual budgets and financial plans and to inform the community about the current financial challenges faced by the Council. We are now being presented with an updated document reflecting the current financial and broader community realities.

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What are some of these realities? Rate capping, set by the State Government, has been and remains below inflation. Earlier this year the same State Government introduced charges that prevent Councils from fully recovering the cost of all waste and recycling costs through a waste service charge.

Because of their policies, the same State Government has overseen the rise of the net debt to gross state product from 5% in 2019 to 25% now, thus restricting their capacity to adequately fund local government for the additional responsibilities given to us. In fairness, I recognise that a significant part of this debt has arisen from support to the Victorian community during the height of the pandemic.

Added to this is the fact that the Commonwealth Government's Financial Assistance Grant, which accounts for around half of our operating grants, has since 1995 fallen in real terms, meaning that we can do less with the funds that we receive. I wonder if we can pick a consistent theme.

In addition, we have the challenges presented by population growth addressing the effects of climate change and achieving environmental sustainability, the need to renew our assets and to respond to changing community wants, leading to an expectation of new initiatives, but we have reduced capacity to do so.

What can be done? Development plans are strategically important as they ensure that developer contributions are committed. Attracting Government grants are and have been very important for new infrastructure, as is the case for Stripling Reserve and for the Aquatic and Health Centre, but they also create future renewal obligations. I believe that we should give greater consideration to the use of infrastructure special rate or charge schemes for major new initiatives.

It is a credit to our financial team that we are in a sound financial position. However, there are challenges identified in Our Financial Story that the next two Councils will need to address. Efficiencies have been embedded into our operations from the business reform program. However, further efficiencies will need to be explored, an assessment of the standards of services that we provide and broader exploration of income sources developed.

As well as the challenges outlined, the document also details the financial principles that underpin the 10-year financial plan. For example, over the next 10-year period there must be sufficient funds in the accumulated unallocated

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cash reserve. If the value of these reserves falls below \$250,000, there must be a replacement plan.

Borrowing, an issue pertinent to the future of the Aquatic and Health Centre, must only be undertaken if we have the capacity to fund the servicing costs for every year of the loan and we must not borrow as a means of financing a budgetary deficit or for asset renewal. Over the next 10-year period, the Council will need to explore alternative income streams, efficiencies and assess what is an affordable standard of service to our community. The document will be a key resource for our new Councillors and for community engagement participants when developing the new Council plan. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. Would you like to speak to the motion, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Just quickly. I think Councillor Allen has done an excellent job of covering all the key points.

I think it's a really helpful and transparent look at the financial challenges that Council faces and how we plan to manage these now and over the span of our 10-year financial plan. I do encourage community to have a read through this document. It's only I think about four pages and it provides a really great summary of everything that Councillor Allen has just spoken about and ultimately we know that Council will need to find ways to either generate higher surpluses or reduce costs and reviewing what we deliver to community and at what cost. Perhaps there will be new opportunities to explore alternate income streams, but in the meantime I encourage community to read the document, understand the implications of what has been said in it and what that means for future spending by Council and let us know if you have any feedback or questions. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion? Councillor Wellington?

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. Yes, I think it is a useful summary of the challenges that we face and it's got some interesting facts in it too about the challenges that we'll face in the future. I think the State Government's level of debt is a really concerning figure and, you know, we rely very heavily on State Government support for various projects and programs that we run and we're going to be really, you know, facing a very tight environment in that regard (inaudible) aren't going to be available to it.

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I would find this - it's sort of a - in a way it's a marketing document. We release it with the Budget so that the community might feel, you know, a little bit sympathetic to the fact that we can't fund everything, I suppose, because it explains all our challenges. I would be more confident that it was sort of a really transparent and useful document if it said something about what we choose to fund and why, what we choose to support and why, and it actually gave sort of an objective analysis around whether we should be in some of the businesses that we choose to be in because that to me is a very significant part of our financial story.

I also think if we had some more information about the rates income that we have that we asked from our residents compared to other benchmark peer shires, peer municipalities, I looked at this for a while but I believe that we have a much higher base, so we're actually starting from a higher base than some other Councils before rate capping came in, so we're already kind of a step ahead there in terms of what we charge our residents.

I think just being totally open about all those sorts of things would be a really good way to start a discussion with the community rather than - you know, it's useful information, but to my mind it's not quite complete because it only gives our side of the story, it doesn't give the other side of the story, but some of us may think it's important that we could be actually doing less and doing it better than what we are doing at the moment. But it's a useful document, we've got some useful information in it.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Wellington. Do any other Councillors wish to speak? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. I'd first like to touch on the constraints we face. Rate capping - while I'm generally not supportive of external controls, I'm not sure I'd like to see what this organisation would do without them. Base charges that don't cover the cost of waste management - I think this is silly at best and reprehensible at worst. If we're going to be charging for it and it costs X, we should be able to charge X and not Y.

Declining capacity of the State Government to financially support us - this was obvious to anyone who endorses the Austrian or Chicago Schools of Economics throughout the last five years, and as has been highlighted by others, the capacity of the state to fund Councils is going to be dramatically reduced in the future.

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Oh, also federal financial assistance grants have not increased in real terms for nearly the entirety of the organisation's existence. We shouldn't be relying upon them, but the reality is if we didn't have them, we couldn't do much of what we do.

So the reality is that we either need to increase our funding or do substantially less. Given the constraints we face, I'll advocate that we do substantially less.

I do not agree with all the financial principles listed in the document, though. The accumulated unallocated cash reserve represents what it costs this organisation to run for one day. Should we experience significant damage to our assets that are not covered by insurance, this reserve may prove to be inadequate. Additionally, borrowings are a terrible way to fund our priorities outside of our rate base. If we can't afford it, we shouldn't be doing it.

Also, I think we need to review the need for utilising the EBITA model because it has the potential to misrepresent our true financial position and if this does happen, it could lead to decisions being made with incomplete data. What I can support is the allocations component, but we shouldn't have to have borrowings, as highlighted in point 14.

But regarding discretionary allocations, while I agree we should have these budgeted for, we shouldn't feel compelled to spend them. I know that often there's this attempt to look at discretionary spending and go, "Oh, we've got all these projects, let's do these", but I think we need to be able to say no sometimes because as the financial challenges continue to build, we are going to have to say no and if you don't get used to it now, it's going to be much harder later on. Given there are only some elements of the document that I can support, I will not be voting to endorse it.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. I agree it's a great succinct document and it's, yeah, a great guide for people.

I just want to reiterate something that I touched on with the Urban Futures Strategy, which is my hope that the next iteration of the Our Financial Story document will recognise the link between development patterns and financial sustainability and particularly that low-density car-dependent suburban neighbourhoods that have single-use zoning have a high cost per capita and a

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low revenue per capita and I think that's an important part of Our Financial Story that we should analyse further and report on next time.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Allen, did you have any closing remarks?

CR ALLEN: Yes, thanks, Mayor. Look, I don't think the purpose of the document really is to reflect what we choose to fund. I think that comes through the Council plan and that Council plan details what the community wish the Council to fund over a four-year period. So I don't think really that this particular document, Our Financial Story, should go into that depth. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. We'll now put this motion to the vote. All those in favour. And opposed. And the motion is carried 8-1.

We now move on to 6.5, MAV State Council Meeting Motion. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of a motion to be tabled at the Municipal Association of Victoria State Council Meeting, which will be held on Friday, 23 August 2024. We have a recommendation before us. Do we have a motion? Thank you, Councillor Schonfelder. Is that as per the recommendation? That is. And do I have a seconder? Councillor Hodge. Would you like to speak, Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Yes, please. Thank you, Mayor. The motion reads as follows, "That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to ensure that there are updated design standards for infrastructure at risk from climate change related extreme weather events, and funding to retrofit existing assets, including stormwater drainage, in areas of high risk". I think everyone would agree that the weather has changed and there is undoubted climate change taking place. Recently we had the driest October on recorded record and March was also a very dry period and we've had very erratic weather events.

We hear in the news about 1 in 100 storms, 100-year storms, they seem to be happening more often, and I know that flooding has occurred in Anglesea near the river, for instance, and we've had Horseshoe Bend Road being damaged from a storm event and we've had other culverts and other infrastructure affected adversely as a result. I also think too that when it comes to the native wildlife, they have a right to this and wombats and koalas that I've seen

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on the roads many times, they have the right to traverse and to move along drains also.

So I think the attitudes and the thinking has changed over time, so it's not about the needs of wildlife but also the fact that weather events are changing and becoming more extreme. So I commend the Council to move this motion and I look forward to when it's presented at the MAV event. Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. And Councillor Hodge, would you like to speak?

CR HODGE: No, thanks. I think Councillor Schonfelder has covered it well. Thanks.

CR PATTISON: Great, thank you. Any other Councillors wish to speak? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. State Government compels us to do things without providing the funding. This motion calls on the State Government to fund infrastructure maintenance that we should be funding ourselves. Rather than do that, I would have preferred to have seen advocacy for removing hurdles government places in our way rather than asking for a handout. I won't support the recommendation.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Any - Councillor Wellington?

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. Yes, look, I really wonder about just the sort of practicality and reality of this motion when, you know, we just heard that State Government is going to have 25% - its funding capacity is going to be substantially reduced and it feels to me a bit futile at the moment to be putting up a really broad motion and saying we want them to, you know, provide funding for retrofitting existing assets. I mean, the cost of that is going to be absolutely massive. It's a huge problem for the state. Talk about bringing it up at the wrong time, frankly.

So I don't know. It feels just like a bit of window dressing really. I can't imagine the State Government is going to find a big bucket of money somewhere and decide to pull it out to give to Councils to fix all their drains and bridges and roads and things like that. So I can't see the point of it really. Thank you.

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CR PATTISON: Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: I share Councillor Wellington's cynicism, but I suppose our residents would expect us to advocate in this space. Look, I know there's a need particularly in regard to our township's draining system to restore new assets. I know in Lorne I think most of the drainage was installed in the 1960s and given our topography and vegetation, the system really does struggle to cope and with a large number of part-time residents, they're not always there to clear open drains, which leads to an added burden on the drainage system. But I understand and agree that it's going to be a difficult request to fulfil. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Schonfelder, do you have any closing remarks? No. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. And the motion is carried 7-2.

We now move on to SCS-063 Fair Access Policy. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's consideration to adopt the Fair Access Policy and Action Plan. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Hodge - as per the recommendation?

CR HODGE: Yes, thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And a seconder? Councillor Gazzard. Would you like to speak, Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Yes, thank you, just very quickly on it. All Councils under the State Government need to have this policy in and we've done a good job on it and it's for the equality and access of public-owned community sports structure for a fairer experience for women and girls - sorry, I got all that mixed up.

I'm proud to say that our netball clubs across our shire are of a very high standard, but we've now seen a really huge influx of growth in women's football and cricket and some of the rooms that were male orientated don't hold the equality and equity for the women that are now playing those games.

So this is - and it's gone out to all the clubs and we've had very successful and positive feedback into it. I think we've actually applied for grants through this now hoping that we'll be able to upgrade some of our rooms.

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But it won't be just all sporting facilities. As the policy goes on in the future, it will be all community spaces and programs to make sure that everything is equitable and accessible to women and girls, and in the back of the report there's a really good policy and all the priorities that it sets out. It clearly outlines our objectives, roles and responsibility and also it aligns well with our Surf Coast Shire Council plan of health and wellbeing.

It's an action plan. That's attached as well, so it shows what we're going to do. But I do recommend it. We need a policy, so I think this one that's been talked about and looked at through the community is a very good one, so I recommend it to Councillors.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Gazzard, would you like to speak?

CR GAZZARD: Thank you. I also support this policy. Sport is one of the most powerful platforms for promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls and there's some really amazing progress that's been made, but still a lot of work to go.

In the Change Our Game State of Play Survey from 2022-2023 Victoria wide, two-thirds of people agreed that their sporting organisation needed to work towards better gender balance, and that's in all levels, participation, coaching and boards, and 9 in 10 people believe there should be more effort to promote girls' continued involvement in sport through their teens. That's one of the main dropout rates is teenage girls and arguably it's the most important time for them to stay involved in sport for their physical and mental health.

I think the principles in this policy are sound. It's been on public exhibition for eight weeks. There were 905 interactions. 38 out of 40 respondents supported or strongly supported the draft policy. 100% strongly supported through the poll and 87% of survey respondents supported - sorry, different stats there. It's got great support. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Gazzard. Would anyone else like to speak on this? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. First a few questions. Do we have any facilities that provide inequitable access between males and females?

CR PATTISON: Is this a question you're seeking a response? Yes. I'll pass that to our CEO.

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MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So thank you, Councillor Barker. There is actually work that we're doing at Spring Creek to try to ensure that we have better access for our women who use those facilities through the football club in particular. So yes, there are. There's work that we've been doing, but we're not there yet. There's still more work required.

CR BARKER: What's the cost to upgrade these facilities?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So it depends on the facility. The work that we're doing at the moment around Spring Creek, we've got a grant from the Federal Government for that, which is I think \$750,000, but we need an additional I think \$1.5 million to complete that project and we've had applications for grants to do that. So it depends on the site and the facility.

CR BARKER: Thank you. Mayor, if you go to point number 10 on page 635 of the agenda you'll see that this is just a policy to receive funding. There's nothing more to it than that. To say we need to have this policy is incorrect. I agree with some of the motherhood statements made by others, but one must understand the tradeoffs for their choices and be prepared to articulate them accurately to be genuine.

Scrolling down further to point 21 on page 636, you'll see there was little engagement on the topic. Additionally, it's a sexist policy. As I've said many times before, I think what your race, religion, socioeconomic status, sex, gender, marital status or political preferences are should not change how you are treated by any government. Listening to some of the costs discussed just before of well over \$1 million to change some toilets I think is a bit rich.

So based on there being no overwhelming demand from our community to push this through and its sexist nature, I will not be supporting the motion.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor. Look, it's not only a matter of access, it's a matter of providing women and girls with quality facilities and facilities of equal quality to those provided to men. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. Councillor Wellington?

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CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. Yes, look, I feel it's a little bit ambiguous this policy. I strongly support people having equitable access to facilities for sport and to environments in which they can thrive in sport and generally equitable access to me means equitable access for anybody of any gender, not just women and girls.

But I do recognise that there are known barriers to women and girls participating in a lot of sports - you know, soccer and football in particular, but probably others as well - and so those problems are actually known and documented and recognised and need to be addressed.

But equally, I presume there are problems for boys who - I can remember when my son many years ago got his first pony and trotted along to pony club until he was about 14 and then all of a sudden it was like, "No, I don't want to go anymore" and he was a really good little rider, but he didn't want to go, it was just almost entirely a female environment and it wasn't cool, you know, for boys to ride horses.

So I feel that there are sports where, you know, it's not just women and girls who are disadvantaged and I think that our policy, Fair Access Policy, by its name should not be confined to women and girls. So it's a bit unclear to me whether this policy is actually confined to women and girls or whether it's just a fair access policy generally. The other point that - and I think there's so much reference in it to women and girls that that is a problem for me.

The other point is that I'm sort of astonished still that we changed our local laws sometime back to remove the prohibition on males going into female change rooms and female toilets and that to me seems entirely inconsistent with what most women and girls would be seeking for in terms of a safe environment in a sporting club or sporting facility. So I find that almost it's very counterintuitive for a Council that is saying that it's driving female participation in sport to have done that.

And the third point I want to make is that this action plan on the end is of more concern to me than the policy itself. If you look at the responsibilities, community users have got significant responsibilities. They're supposed to have fair access images to be displayed.

Oh, incidentally, one of the actions is to promote responsible serving of alcohol at community sports. The wording of that needs to be amended. We shouldn't be promote the serving of alcohol at sports facilities and I know

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that's not what is intended. I think what is intended is if there is alcohol being served, it has to be served responsibly. So that needs to be amended. That's on page 650.

Then if you look at responsibilities of clubs and community groups (inaudible) - well, I absolutely support that too, but who pays for that?

If you go further down, to celebrate successful contributions, well, it feels to me as if there's an intention in this that we're going to require clubs to sign up to this as part of their access to facilities --

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Wellington. I'll get you to wrap up now because you're well over time, thank you.

CR WELLINGTON: Council facilities, thank you. So if I can ask for an extension of time for a moment because I feel this is a really important point. These clubs are run by volunteers --

CR PATTISON: I'll give you an extra minute, thanks.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you very much. They're run by volunteers and there's a lot of responsibilities attributed to them in this action plan which I suspect they're not aware are coming. Surf Coast Shire receiving completed gender-inclusive sporting club self-assessments with an accompanied plan for real consideration to change, are we going to require all our volunteer clubs to do that? That is a significant commitment from people who are pretty flat out doing what they're doing.

So I think there's a problem with the action plan. I'm not going to support it on that basis. The policy is sort of okay but a bit ambiguous, but the action plan is not - I don't think it's reasonable to impose that on volunteer people and people trying to create these opportunities doing the best they can and presumably we won't be getting more funding for it and presumably Council won't be directing funding towards this because we're going to be in a very tight position ourselves paying off other loans. So I think this is problematic.

CR PATTISON: Thank you.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you.

CR PATTISON: And Councillor Hodge, do you have any closing remarks?

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CR HODGE: Just very quickly. If Council does accept the recommendation, it's very simple. It will assist in taking positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and use of community sports infrastructure. I know lots and lots of volunteers would want to see that equity and if that's a motherhood statement, I'm happy to say it.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. The motion is carried 7-2.

We now move on to our next item on the agenda, 6.7, Barwon Tennis Strategy 2024-2034. The purpose of this report is to present the Barwon Tennis Strategy 2024-2034 to Council for noting. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Hodge - is that as per the recommendation?

CR HODGE: Yes, thank you.

CR PATTISON: And do we have a seconder? Councillor Allen. Do you want to speak?

CR HODGE: Yes. This strategy supersedes the 2015 G21 strategy and we've seen a lot of growth in between the strategies. The five local governments in the area all have put this out to their communities and the feedback has been put together in this report.

It is an assessment of all the tennis infrastructure right throughout the entire region. It sets strategic direction and how to support people that have tennis and it lists shire by shire their courts, the status that they are and what they might be able to be in the future.

In Surf Coast there's 17 venues, ranging from I think Spring Creek Torquay is one of the biggest with six, I know Aireys Inlet has got a few too. But what is interesting, it shows strategics of where clubs can go to in the future. We know there's going to be a lot of advocacy, especially for the growth in Spring Creek tennis, the Torquay tennis club. The Mayor and I met recently with the club. They've got plans. They want to do new rooms and of course there's a cost to that as well.

But they know that there's a cost to it, there's not a lot of money around, but having the strategic direction will be able to go to politicians and seeing that this is an area of growth at Torquay netball club.

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It goes right through and tells you which one. There's a big list on page 39 of what they've got, of lighting and what they're trying to do. But tennis is growing - not at as big a rate as they thought, but it's still growing and I think with more people coming to Torquay and Winchelsea, we've got to really look at these G21 strategic things to help us plan for the future. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. And Councillor Allen, would you like to speak?

CR ALLEN: Look, really, this is a strategy for noting really because it doesn't really require any financial commitment by the Council. It's a strategy put out by Barwon Tennis to encompass all of the participatory councils in the G21 and as such, I'm happy to second it.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Wellington?

CR WELLINGTON: Yes, I just wanted to note that in the Surf Coast Shire list which is on page 686 of the agenda papers the Winchelsea Tennis Club is noted to be "Small venue, not lit, limited nearby competition, high demand", but then the action is maintained and I just wonder if the folk who wrote this actually understood the strategic direction of Winchelsea because that seems to me - you know, it's a very modest little facility and it's certainly not going to accommodate the demand in Winchelsea over the next - you know, for this strategy.

So I think that that's a bit of an error really and unfortunately that will be - that will make it more difficult for the Winchelsea Tennis Club to grow. So I hope that our shire don't take that as too much of sort of a framework for the future of that club because I don't think that really reflects the importance of that club in the future of the town.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Do you have any closing remarks, Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: No.

CR PATTISON: Oh, sorry, Councillor Barker, you'd like to speak?

CR BARKER: Do you want to go?

CR GAZZARD: You go first.

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CR BARKER: The strategy's ambition of tennis thriving in the Barwon region can be achieved without Council needing to support the document. Given the infrastructure is already in place, all that needs to be done is let clubs need to coordinate independent of Council say for any booking processes.

I think this is just another thing for us to get involved in that strains not only our financial resources, but burdens our workforce with unnecessary tasks. They're already stretched and I won't overload them. It might seem to only be a little bit of work, but lots of little bits of policy add up.

Further, I want to go into Buckley. I don't know if many people know, but we've got tennis courts in Buckley that were offered with some private land. Over time, Council has taken away infrastructure from this Buckley tennis courts, even to the point where now the locals need to string up a piece of string all tied together to make a net.

So before we start trying to save the world with tennis, how about we just look at how we are negatively impacting tennis in our own backyard before we start doing all this extra stuff?

CR PATTISON: Councillor Gazzard, did you want to speak?

CR GAZZARD: Oh, thank you. Given the item is just for noting, I'm not going to go into great detail. I think it is just a bit of a shame given the policy on - the Fair Access Policy we just passed that there's not any mention of gender equality in tennis, but again, it's not something we really have any control over.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: I only just twigged on this. I don't believe there's any mention of CORA in here and again, yeah, it's only for noting, but it would be worth noting to the authors that there's a Mouratoglou Academy proposed for CORA which would have a huge impact on the tennis picture in the region, seeing as Councillor Barker has mentioned Buckley.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Do you have any closing remarks, Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Just for noting, so no.

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CR PATTISON: For noting, great. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And opposed. And the motion is carried 8-1.

We now move on to SCS-060 Environmental Management Policy. The purpose of this report is to present the Environmental Management Policy to Council for adoption. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Stapleton - as per the recommendation?

CR STAPLETON: Yes, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And a seconder, please? Councillor Bodsworth. Would you like to speak, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Thanks, Mayor. So this Environmental Management Policy is required under the revised Environmental Protection Act where Councils, along with others, hold a general environmental duty to proactively identify and manage environmental risk.

So importantly, while the policy is a legal requirement, it also aligns with Council's existing commitment to environmental leadership, as demonstrated through our Council plan, the Climate Emergency Response Plan, the Circular Economy Action Plan, and our Environmentally Sustainable Development Goals in relation to planning, building and asset management, and there's others.

The second part of this report refers to the Environmental Management System, or EMS, which has been developed essentially to implement the commitments that are outlined in the policy. Council has a raft of existing policies, strategies, plans and management procedures that are relevant to this policy and are helpfully listed in the EMS with a guide as to how each commitment within the policy is reflected in these existing plans.

It's good to note that the Environmental Management Policy is guided by a series of principles which underpin Council's approach to managing environmental outcomes. These include accelerating positive change through environmental leadership, partnerships, engagement, innovation and knowledge sharing; supporting the community in their efforts to drive positive environmental outcomes; and approaching environmental compliance from a risk management-based perspective, ensuring awareness prevention, mitigation and management are demonstrated.

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The draft policy is guided by the Australian Standard on Environmental Management Systems and I encourage my fellow Councillors to support its adoption tonight. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. And Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. The only thing that I want to add to what Councillor Stapleton has covered is the strong interest that the Audit and Risk Committee took in this piece of work. Perhaps Councillor Wellington will touch on that as well, but Councillor Wellington also took a strong interest and provided some great input on this as it worked through the draft phases.

The Audit and Risk Committee particularly looked at clarifying commitments and improving the legibility of the overall environmental management framework and the relationship between the policy and the system. That's basically - so I basically want to just highlight the value that the Audit and Risk Committee provided in developing this policy and the link with the system.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Any other Councillors? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. The road to hell is paved with good intentions, like the intentions this policy is driven by. We have a State Government that requires all persons, including Council, to proactively identify and manage environmental risk. We've had a variety of environmental obligations over the years, but it did not stop this organisation from letting development in our shire from damaging the Karaaf Wetlands and even when that damage happened, we weren't punished sufficiently for it. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that if we keep the drains clean, infrastructure at capacity to deal with most events, and generally keep pollution out of our natural environment it will thrive.

We're forced by the State Government to have this policy, but as we've learned in recent years, governments of all levels will tell us what to do, but if enough people say no, then they've got no ability to enforce their demands. I say no to this.

There was one part of the policy I did like. Who can guess? Ensuring diverse views and perspectives are considered in decision making. I bring many diverse views to this organisation and anyone who's watched these meetings would know that this perspective is seldom listened to, let alone considered.

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CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak? Councillor Wellington?

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you very much. So as a member of the audit committee, I have taken an interest in this and it's been through two iterations and this is obviously the second of them. I was disappointed with the first version of it and I'm not really satisfied with the second version of it either, mainly because, from my perspective, it - sorry, I just need to get it up here - from my perspective, it establishes a set of principles which are all, you know, good principles that we can all support, will reduce emissions, will support the community reduce emissions, will avoid waste, will practise sustainable procurement, et cetera, so there's a whole lot of things that we would all agree with, I'm absolutely sure of that, but there's no specificity about what we're going to do to actually achieve that.

So what the policy sets out is a set of principles. Now, it did, in my view, improve between the first version and the second version - I just lost it, sorry - because, yes, it shows a little bit more of a logical frame through, you know, but essentially it's a statement of principles without any measurable outcomes and then it talks about - then it says we're going to implement all this via a system. The system is something like 20 or - somewhere between 20 and 25 policies, protocols, procedures, things that are at varying stages of development and were never designed as part of the system, they were designed individually and they've all been pulled together and we say that's a system.

And if you have a look, what it means is that the policy doesn't tell you a great deal other than that those sub policies, plans and procedures, et cetera, exist and then you need to go to them to find out what Council says it's actually going to be doing. And when you go to them, you'll find most of the 30 pages, or a lot of the ones I've checked, you know, they're quite substantial documents. So we're kind of putting out what looks like something really strong to the community, but it's not because it's really difficult to find, to say what is Council actually going to do about that?

I did draw the audit committee's attention to the KPMG climate policy, which I had up here a minute ago and I've just lost, but it is more explicit - oh, environment policy, I should say. It's a much more explicit document that basically says, you know, we're committed to good environmental management and it has a set of actions attached to it which includes things like we're going to measure waste generation across our operations, and

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presumably report on them; we're going to reduce office waste to landfill by 20% and reach 90% diversion rate by 25; we're going to eliminate all single use plastic items; we're going to reduce food waste (inaudible). So there's some quite measurable things about their resourcing of renewable energies, about their reduction in gross emissions, et cetera. So it's actually to me a more meaningful document, whereas ours is, you know, very high level.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Wellington. I'll get you to wrap it up now because your time has been exceeded.

CR WELLINGTON: (Inaudible) advised by other organisations to make this high level. From my perspective, it becomes less useful the more high level it gets. So I'm disappointed in it. But having said that, you know, I sort of fundamentally think it's got some sound principles in it, so I suppose I'll support it, but to me --

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Wellington. I'll ask you to finish up now.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak? Do you have any closing remarks, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Yes, look, I guess I'd just add that given the raft of plans, strategic plans and documents that already exist within Council to address our environmental management, the policy and the associated management system do a good job of identifying what those documents are and how the various actions or principles in the policy already exist in these various plans, and if you look at I think it's page 707 on the agenda, where it talks about the establishment of environmental objectives, targets and programs, which I agree are really important, there are already so many Council strategies, policies and plans that address these and albeit I acknowledge that it's not necessarily straightforward to go through each of those plans and identify what Council is doing in relation to managing and minimising its environmental impact, but it's also not practical to reinvent the wheel when we have all these existing strategies in place. In particular, I think the Climate Emergency Response Plan for 2021-2031 incorporates a Climate Emergency Action Plan and I think that really clearly articulates what Council is doing in terms of its responsibilities in this space.

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So I'm really comfortable with the policy and the management system that has been proposed here tonight. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. And the motion is carried 8-1.

We now move on to 6.9, SCS-029 Rabbit Management Policy. The purpose of this report is to present the reviewed Rabbit Management Policy to Council for adoption. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Barker - as per the recommendation.

CR BARKER: Yes, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And seconded by Councillor Bodsworth. Would you like to speak, Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Very briefly, thank you. This policy is actually pretty sound. I especially like the community-led element that highlights we'll aim to remove barriers for the community. We should employ this strategy more often in all areas. I would like to see us move away from using 1080, but can see there are some places it can be used.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. So yes, similar to Councillor Barker, I'd like to recognise the great contribution that local Landcare groups in the Surf Coast municipality make to rabbit control and to a number of land management actions that are really important to us all.

I would like to highlight one aspect of this, which is on page 718 there's description of rabbit hotspots. I've had a look at the hotspot criteria. The hotspot list is a dynamic list. Places become hotspots and don't necessarily stay hotspots forever and the list changes.

I think one thing that we've underrated a little bit in the hotspot criteria is the risk that rabbit diggings pose on playing surfaces, which has been a really severe issue at Ellimatta Reserve in Anglesea, where the footy field has been dug up by rabbits and it poses an obvious hazard to players which is obvious to us as the manager of the reserve, but I don't think it's necessarily obvious to the players, which is the worst-case scenario for liability because the people using it aren't necessarily aware that they're at risk like that, whereas we as

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the land manager are or at least should be - would be expected to be aware of that risk to people.

And another thing I'd like to do, given that the Surf Coast and Barwon Park Winchelsea was the - I don't want to steal any thunder from Winchelsea ward Councillors, but the launching place of Australia's rabbit crisis, rabbits are now considered the number one invasive species in Australia.

In releasing 24 rabbits in October 1859, Thomas Austin said, "The introduction of a few rabbits could do little harm and might provide a touch of home in addition to a spot of hunting". By 1866, the Geelong Advertiser reported 50,000 rabbits hunted in the district and interestingly, they were first released in Tasmania in 1827, so 30-odd years before Thomas Austin released his rabbits, and it's thought that the interbreeding between Thomas Austin's rabbits and the original Aussie rabbits who'd been habituated to harsh conditions and formed this hybrid which was a super rabbit, it's thought that that's why they went crazy in the way they did. So Winchelsea wasn't the first location, sorry, but it was where they really took off.

But it's a really good policy, I agree with Councillor Barker. I support it strongly.

CR PATTISON: Thank you for the history lesson, always very informative.

CR BODSWORTH: Sorry, I know it's late.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Schonfelder has his hand up and then we'll move to Councillor Allen. Councillor Schonfelder.

CR SCHONFELDER: Just quickly, I'd like to thank Councillor Bodsworth for that insight. I would like rabbits to be eradicated, to be very honest, but I do know that during the Depression rabbits were referred to as underground mutton and did keep people alive during that period.

I would like to echo the sentiments expressed about commending Landcare groups for the work they do with rabbit eradication and I know that the actual warrens, the removal of the warrens is so important because that's where the rabbits breed. Rabbits do go into culverts, but I've been informed that they don't actually breed in the culverts.

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I have volunteered at Barwon Park and there have been rabbit warrens there that have been quite dangerous. I nearly broke my leg once when I was doing some mowing there. I took my own ride-on mower there and I really hope that we do make progress on this scheme.

I do agree with Councillor Barker about not wanting to use 1080 because I know it can have other effects on other wildlife as well. But I encourage all those involved to keep up the good work in this regard. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Oh, look, Mayor, my comment is a little flippant, so I'll defer to Councillor Wellington and then I'll make my comment.

CR PATTISON: Sure. Councillor Wellington, would you like to speak on the matter?

CR WELLINGTON: Yes, thank you. Look, this policy - in 2017 I was very much part of the development of this policy because there was a huge rabbit problem down at Pentonville Road, there's some Council-owned land down there, and also on the Barwon Valley Pony Club grounds up at Moriac, which is extremely dangerous. I mean, I relate to what Councillor Bodsworth said about the sporting fields. You know, if you put your ankle down into a rabbit burrow, it's a very dangerous situation and if you're on a horse and the horse does that, it almost sort of increases the potential consequences.

I worked very closely with the community and with Council officers and Landcare groups and what have you and we put forward this policy. I think the policy pretty much hasn't changed and I think it's a good policy. The only question I have is how well we are managing to control and I don't think I've seen any outcome reports on this and I think we should have them occasionally that we - I don't know whether it's possible to do periodic audits of rabbit numbers. I mean, they obviously vary from season to season, but I have been told by the community that they would like to see Council doing more and I've also been told there is a reluctance to use 1080 and the other poison, which I can't remember what it is, but there's two poisons that are used.

Initially when we started this policy, Council officers had a view that we didn't use those poisons and the community view was very strong that you need to use the poisons if you're going to get good control of the rabbits. And then

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there's the debate about whether the poisons are cruel to rabbits and I suppose in my mind the issue would be if you can reduce the population, you're going to be cruel to fewer rabbits by whatever means you control them than if the populations are not controlled - you know, if you're not effectively controlling the population, you're obviously going to be cruel to more rabbits.

So I think that poison is a very important part against rabbits and it should be being used. I'd like to see a progress report every 12 months or so about what the program has been and what its success has been like that year.

I was also told this year by - oh, Pindone is the - sorry, Pindone is the other mechanism that can be used, the other poison that can be used, and there is support for that.

I've also been told that Council used to be more active in mailing out notifications to people about the Landcare sort of programs around rabbit management and it no longer does it, so I'll follow that up with the CEO because I think that again it would be a good thing for Council to restart if it stopped it to make sure that the community is aware when there is a program under way that they can participate in. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. And Councillor Allen, your flippant comment?

CR ALLEN: My flippant comment. Look, it's late in the evening. I just think it's a pity that Councillor Barker's libertarian values don't extend to rabbits.

CR BARKER: No, they don't.

CR ALLEN: And that they should be free to do what they want and not hindered by regulations.

CR BARKER: They can do whatever they want as long as they don't cause harm to others, which they do.

CR PATTISON: Alrighty. On that, we - I assume, Councillor Barker, you have no closing statement?

CR BARKER: Yes.

CR PATTISON: Yes? We'll put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

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We now move on to 6.10, Rolling Three Year Strategic Internal Audit Plan. The purpose of this report is for Council to consider endorsing the rolling three-year Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2024-2026. Do we have a mover of a motion for this item? Councillor Bodsworth - as per the recommendation?

CR BODSWORTH: Yes, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And a seconder? Councillor Wellington. Would you like to speak, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Only to sort of echo what I said in the last - sorry, in the Environmental Management Policy talking about the strong interest that the Audit and Risk Committee has taken in the rolling SIAP and, yes, it's a topic that gets a high level of engagement every meeting. There's been a lot of work go into reviewing and sort of making sure that the list reflects the Council strategic direction and also things that are happening within the local government sector and even outside the local government sector. So I guess just to highlight the rigour with which the Audit and Risk Committee particularly approaches this and I hope that Councillors have got their heads around it and I definitely support it.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Wellington, would you like to speak to this one?

CR WELLINGTON: Yes, just briefly. It's been through a really good process. The committee is very robust in its planning and in its reviews of these reports and these audits are done by independent consultants, experts, and the chart shows you when they're going to be done, when they will be presented to the Audit Committee and there's often really good discussion and debate about them and, you know, they try to move them around the different operational functions of Council to capture the ones where there's likely to be lessons to be learned and things that, you know, either need to be - maybe we know this needs to be learnt, we want to do that systematically improve things. So I think it's a good plan. I'm happy to support it.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thank you. I appreciate the work that's gone into the development of the document. Overall it's pretty sound. But SR7 on page 14 of the document is incomplete. I'm very disappointed that this error has made

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its way through to the meeting's public agenda. We've got to do better. There's plenty of eyes that go across all this sort of stuff. I will support it on the proviso that it is complete.

CR PATTISON: Any other Councillors? Closing remarks, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: No, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

We now move on to 6.11, Project Budget Adjustments and Cash Reserve Transfers - June 2024. This report contains proposed project Budget adjustments and cash reserve transfers for Council approval. The report presents adjustments including existing projects requiring adjustment, project closures, new projects to be initiated, Chief Executive Officer-approved transfers under delegation, or corrections to prior reports presented to Council. We have a motion before us. Do we have a mover? Councillor Gazzard - as per the recommendation?

CR GAZZARD: Yes.

CR PATTISON: And a seconder, please? Councillor Hodge. Councillor Gazzard, would you like to speak?

CR GAZZARD: No, thank you.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Look, it's just a transparent where our money is going back and forth from. The report contains proposed project Budget adjustments and cash reserve transfer for our approval. It lists them all there right through from the multi art centre and it includes the Anglesea Retail Shed, Barwon walk. So there's a big diversity of where our money is going and what's being grant funded and how much we've actually saved on it, so it's a transparent projection of that time on those projects. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor. Look, I note the reallocation of the closed Lorne Structure Plan Project of \$50,000. To start, the Lorne Affordable Housing

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Initiative Project, it's only the first step. It will be welcome in Lorne because obviously our need is great. We were placed behind work in Anglesea, Aireys Inlet and Winchelsea because there was land available and unlike those townships, availability of council-owned land is limited in Lorne and unlocking what we own is often in conjunction with other state agencies. But it's a good start and we could use that also as leverage to gain additional funding to start that process.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Yes, I just wanted to flag the walk, the Painkalac project in table 3. I'm really disappointed to see that this project in Aireys Inlet is listed as closed and that the \$50,000 that was allocated for this project has been returned to cash reserves.

Although the trail along the river has been deemed inappropriate at this point in time, my understanding was that the walking the Painkalac concept was not limited to the river, but also provided scope for a pathway along Bambra Road to also be considered. More specifically, a walking trail on Bambra Road has been identified as a priority in Council's structure plan for Aireys Inlet as well as in the shire's pathways strategy. It's in the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Destination Plan for Aireys Inlet and it's been highlighted by the Aireys Inlet District Association and the Aireys Tourism Traders Association as a priority pathway.

The various plans - these various plans that are applicable to Aireys Inlet do point to the need to make Bambra Road more accessible and safer for pedestrians and young cyclists. Obviously it's important to protect the local character and the significant environmental value of the Painkalac value, but a pathway linking the bottom shops from River Reserve Road along Bambra Road to Old Coach Road is listed as a key action in the Council structure plan and given this level of support and strategic intent that already exists, I hope that this small allocation of funds can be redirected back to Aireys Inlet and specifically Bambra Road for further work to understand the potential for a future pathway in this location. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. So I totally support Councillor Stapleton's comments on that, and further on the subject of pathways, I'd just like to highlight and celebrate the TAC grant funding through the Safe Local Roads

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and Streets Program, close to \$2 million - well, that and other funding of close to \$2 million in funding for walking and cycling connectivity and safety. It's a fantastic thing to celebrate and I'd like to congratulate the staff who've worked hard on that through the Safer Cycling Strategy and other pieces of work and their professionalism and great advocacy has all come together to get that excellent result that we see tabulated there.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak? Oh, Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Thank you, Mayor. Councillor Hodge mentioned the Barwon River Walk, which has been so warmly welcomed by the Winchelsea community. I also know the Winchelsea Place Plan, which is a structure plan, as a result of work undertaken in the Urban Futures Strategy Winchelsea is identified as the primary growth area and is a priority placemaking project. There's also (inaudible) Hall, which is at the gathering space at Winchelsea also known as the Mud Hut, so many people looking forward to having that project completed.

I thought I'd mention that the Winchelsea Bowls Club are absolutely delighted to have their sports lighting project funded from the State Government, over \$112,000 worth of funding with the installation of four light poles, lighting controls and switchboard modification to the Winchelsea Bowling Club. I must mention, Mayor, that I've been told by members of the bowling club that Councillor Allen is quite a good bowler. Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Schonfelder.

CR ALLEN: I wasn't worried about the Winchelsea community.

CR PATTISON: Did you want to speak, Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Very briefly, yes. I won't support the approval of the project Budget adjustments as it takes over \$10 million from hardworking Victorian taxpayers and funnels it into our little 1500 square kilometre shire. The state is already broken in astronomical debt. It is irresponsible for us to accept these payments.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Any closing remarks, Councillor Gazzard?

CR GAZZARD: No.

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CR PATTISON: No. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. And the motion is passed 8-1.

We now move on to Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation - Planning and Environment Act 1987. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement for authorised officers under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 through the updated Instrument of Authorisation and Appointment. This instrument requires updating due to recent staff changes. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Stapleton - as per the recommendation?

CR STAPLETON: Yes, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And a seconder? Councillor Barker. Would you like to speak, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: No, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Would you like to speak, Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: No.

CR PATTISON: Would anybody like to speak? We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

We now move on to 6.13, Conflict of Interest Records. The purpose of this report is to present conflict of interest records received since the previous Council meeting. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Stapleton - as per the recommendation?

CR STAPLETON: Yes, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And a seconder? Councillor Bodsworth. Would you like to speak, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: No, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: No, thanks.



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CR PATTISON: No. Would anybody like to speak? No. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

There is no urgent business, so I now declare the meeting closed at 9.56. Thank you very much for your engagement. Good night, everybody.